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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

3 DAYS BEFORE Christmas

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Airport back to full operations

By DAISY DEMAPAN
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REPORTER

As of 6am yesterday morning, the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport was back to full day and night operations after experiencing problems with its runway electrical lighting system over the weekend.

The limited hours of operation starting Friday resulted in airlines rescheduling their nighttime flights into daytime flights but as of now, the electrical problem that resulted in only 30 percent of runway lights being operational has been identified and fixed.

Commonwealth Ports Authority director Mary Ann Lizama was contacted for further elaboration on the exact electrical issues but comments were

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Tinian Dynasty says it paid all fees

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

It's been a week since Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino's aborted reopening of its casino floor, but its general manager, Christopher Bishop, maintains that the company has paid all fees and is in the process of fulfilling all requirements set by the Tinian Casino Gaming and Control Commission.

» Bishop: The rest of requirements now in the works

He also said that Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission executive director Lucy Blanco-Maratita doesn't want to take responsibility for the casino's failed opening, which is why she told reporters that Tinian Dynasty was non-compliant with the conditions set by the regulator.

"…because she does not want to be blamed, but all those things are in the works or paid already," Bishop told *Saipan Tribune* in a message via social media.

Blanco-Maratita reiterated that Tinian Dynasty's owner, Hong Kong Entertainment

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2 women carve unique paths at CUC

Nicialynn Duenas Cabrera is the CNMI's first lineperson. CUC

Janice Celis is following in the footsteps of women who traded convention for fresh air as a meter reader. CUC

In the aftermath of Typhoon Soudelor, linemen became the face of Saipan's recovery and restoration efforts. From the installation of the first power poles along Chalan Pale Arnold in August to the installation of transformers and drop lines in December, the community took notice of the men in hard hats and reflective vests who rebuilt the power grid from scratch.

Prior to Nov. 15, 2015, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. employed only linemen to climb power poles, maneuver bucket trucks, and sag power lines. That all changed on Nov. 16, when Nicialynn Duenas Cabrera began her first day on the job as the CNMI's first lineperson.

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LOCAL

FEMA's Stephen M. De Blasio bid adieu to the islands that has become a sort of home.

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Sudanese refugee tells stories of forced deportation from Jordan.

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LIFE & STYLE

Miss Philippines wins the Miss Universe tiara in a shocking twist.

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CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

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Local

Torres addresses water concerns of Kagman farmers

Responding to concerns within the farming community regarding equitable and consistent access to water, acting governor Ralph DLG. Torres met with Department of Agriculture officials to uncover the problems with the current irrigation system and resolve longstanding issues.

"Agriculture is the bedrock of our economy and livelihood in the CNMI," Torres said during his visit to the Kagman water wells yesterday morning. "One key aspect of creating a successful industry in agriculture is the access to water. Today we have made good progress toward revamping the way we as a government provide this essential factor to our many farmers in the Kagman area."

To better provide water services to the Kagman farmers, Torres has pledged to allocate funding for the repair and rehabilitation of existing water pumps in the area, as well as coordinate with other departments and agencies to improve the water catchment system, water storage, and irrigation pathways.

According to Department of Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Richard Seman, "This is a necessary step in ensuring our farmers are supported and given the resources they need to succeed in their operations. I thank the acting governor for taking a hands-on approach in helping those in our community advance our farming sector."

Looking ahead, Torres recognizes the need to find an immediate solution. "Our Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, along with their federal counterparts, have been raising the very real possibility that this coming year will bring a drought to the CNMI. We need to help our farmers prepare for the likelihood of decreased rainfall so that their crops and their livelihoods will not be harmed."

For Torres, the success of farmers has wide ranging benefits for the entire community. "The farmers have had to struggle with the weather this year and have shown incredible resilience. Supporting them through improving our well and irrigation system means more fresh and healthy produce for our families and increased economic activity from our local producers. The improvements we are working toward will be a win for us all." ***(Office of the Lieutenant Governor)***

Measure setting fees for tourists visiting MPAs headed to Senate

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

A bill to authorize the Department of Lands and Natural Resources to assess fees on tourists visiting marine protected areas in order to fund conversation efforts passed the House of Representatives yesterday.

House Bill 19-105, authored by Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan), passed with all 20 House members approving the bill, including amendments.

Under the measure, which now heads to the Senate for action, DLNR will be responsible for the development of a system of assessing fees for entry and use of marine protected areas, or MPAs, in the Commonwealth.

MPAs in the Commonwealth include Managaha Island, Bird Island, Forbidden Island, Sasanhaya Bay on Rota, and the Tinian Marine Reserve Area on Tinian.

Fees will only be assessed on nonresident visitors. Collected fees will be deposited in a "Marine Conservation Revolving Fund," according to the bill.

The bill states that lack of funding for a Marine Conservation Section, as mandated by Public Law 12-2, has prevented the implementation of much needed management practices. Public Law 12-2 is an "unfunded mandate," the bill says.

"The Legislature finds that the imposition of a marine conservation fee to be paid by tourists entering marine conservation areas is a reasonable, necessary, and worthwhile means to generate the necessary management of funds."

Demapan introduced an amendment that sets aside a percentage of the fees collected to fund the CNMI's $2 million commitment to the Micronesian Challenge, a multi-jurisdictional conservation strategy adopted by the CNMI, Guam, Palau, and the Marshall Islands in 2006.

It calls for 10 percent of fees collected to be deposited in a separate "CNMI Micronesia Challenge Fund." Demapan's amendment requires that, once the fund reaches $2 million, 10 percent of collected fees would be deposited into the "Marine Conservation Revolving Fund."

Noting similar fees in other districts, the bill states that Hawaii currently charges $47.05 for entry into its Hanauma Bay Marine Life Conservation District, Palau requires visitors to pay $50 departure tax/green fee upon exiting the republic, and a $100 permit for entering its protected jellyfish lake, among other countries.

ERRATUM

The picture published on the front page of the *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, Dec. 21, incorrectly identified it as the winning float entry of the Chacha Oceanview Middle School. It was, in fact, a photo of the Best Sunshine-TOPS non-competing float. Our apologies for the error.

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3 suspects in 'ice' shipment case plead not guilty

The three men accused of being behind the alleged shipment of 4.9 lbs of methamphetamine or "ice" worth $850,000 entered not guilty pleas in federal court yesterday.

Xi Huang, Shicheng Cai, and Zhaopeng Chen, through their counsels, waived the formal advisement of their constitutional rights and the reading of the charges against them.

The three pleaded not guilty to an indictment charging them with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona set the jury trial for Feb. 9, 2016.

She remanded them to the custody of the U.S. Marshal.

Attorneys Robert Torres, Mark Hanson, and David Banes appeared as court-appointed counsels for Huang, Cai, and Chen respectively.

Assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe appeared for the U.S. government.

According to the indictment, between Nov. 30 and Dec. 4, 2015, Huang, Cai and Chen conspired to possess methamphetamine with intent to distribute.

A routine Customs inspection at the Port of Saipan of a 40-foot container from Guangzhou, China, resulted in the discovery of the 4.9 lbs of "ice" hidden in three plastic bags in one of nine 5-gallon paint containers last Dec. 2.

Joint federal and local enforcers investigated the discovery of the "ice" that led to the arrest of Huang, Cai, and Chen, all Chinese nationals. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Judge orders expedited resolution of Judicial Building loan issue

»CNMI govt has not acted on proposal to extend repayment of loan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI government has not acted to date on the CNMI Settlement Fund's proposal to extend the repayment terms of the Judicial Building loan that already matured last March 1, with over $4.5 million still due.

With the government's inaction, U.S. District Court for the NMI designated Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood ordered Settlement Fund trustee Joyce C. H. Tang and the counsel for the CNMI government on Friday to expedite the resolution of the proposed reinstatement and extension of the terms of the Judicial Building loan.

Tydingco-Gatewood ordered Tang to work closely with Finance Secretary Larissa Larson on the possibility that the government will obtain another loan to pay off the debt to the Settlement Fund for the Judicial Building loan.

The judge directed Tang to keep the counsel for members of Betty Johnson's class action advised of any resolution reached as to this matter.

Citing the challenges Saipan experienced in the aftermath of Typhoon Soudelor, the Settlement Fund is offering the CNMI government a proposal to give it more time to repay the loan.

Tang had already informed Gov. Eloy S. Inos that the Judicial Building loan matured in March 2015, and the entire principal balance of $4,503,660.86 is now due, in addition to over $47,000 in interest.

Tang discussed the Settlement Fund's proposal for extension of the loan's repayment plan in her letter to Inos last Nov. 2 and in her recent report for the Fund's combined second, third and fourth quarters of fiscal year 2015.

Tang said that Inos asked at an earlier meeting if the loan could be refinanced.

Tang said the Settlement Fund is willing to extend the repayment terms provided that the principal amount of $4.5 million will be amortized over a 10-year period at the stated rate of interest under the note of 7.7 percent interest.

Tang said monthly payment should be $52,014.55 and that the first payment will be due on Dec. 1, 2015.

Tang said that among the conditions is that the CNMI government should pay $250,000 to be applied first to the outstanding accrued interest and then to the principal by no later than Dec. 1, 2015.

Through a Judicial Building Financing Act of 1994, the CNMI government was allowed to secure a loan from the NMI Retirement Fund in order to build the Judicial Complex in Susupe.

The construction of the Judicial Complex began in 1995 and was completed in May 1998. The revenues generated by the Judiciary are the primary sources of funds to repay the loan.

Talakhaya Beach red-flagged

The Division of Environmental Quality has red-flagged the Talakhaya Beach and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of this location for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified. Samples collected from the Talakhaya Beach contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

Suspect in theft of Govendo's gun kept detained

Habitual offender Gilbert Kaipat, who has been indicted for alleged possession of a gun and ammunition that he allegedly stole from the house of Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo in Dandan, will remain behind bars pending trial.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted the U.S. government's request to continue Kaipat's detention. If Kaipat is released from custody by the Superior Court, he will be detained pending trial in his case in federal court by the U.S. Marshal Service, Manglona said.

The 19-year-old Kaipat was arraigned on Friday. He is represented by court-appointed counsel Colin Thompson.

Kaipat, also known as Cling Phillip Kaipat, pleaded not guilty to the indictment charging him with possession of a stolen firearm and possession of ammunition.

According to the indictment, on Nov. 5, 2015, Kaipat unlawfully possessed a 9mm Smith and Wesson pistol that he knew was stolen. The defendant also allegedly possessed a stolen hollowpoint 9mm round of ammunition.

At the preliminary hearing last month in Superior Court, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho found probable cause to charge Kaipat with burglary, theft, and criminal mischief.

Police said a surveillance camera at a store near Govendo's house led to the identification and arrest of Kaipat, who then guided investigators to a trash bin at the bakery where he worked and where he hid the stolen gun. Detectives recovered the judge's police-issued 9mm pistol.

Govendo was off-island when the incident happened. His wife discovered the burglary when she returned home from running errands. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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‘Volunteers are the backbone of Paskong Pinoy’

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Umang Glee Club performs in the choral competition of last Sunday’s Paskong Pinoy at the Marianas Business Plaza grounds in Susupe.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Volunteers who worked tirelessly in the days leading up to the “Paskong Pinoy” helped in the successful staging of the annual event last Sunday at the Marianas Business Plaza grounds in Susupe.

United Filipino Organization president Bong Malasarte said that he assigned each volunteer to specific committees to distribute the workload.

“These volunteers, young and old, helped me in making sure we bring joy to the community. There is division of work since this is a big project,” said Malasarte. “A lot of our youth were also involved in organizing the event. It is a form of development and training for them.”

Games, entertainment numbers, and various contests entertained the crowd, with the Deal or No Deal game show, hosted by Macoi Aguda, serving as the highlight of the evening’s festivities.

The Umang Glee Club of Koblerville Elementary School bested Green Meadow School in their two-cornered fight in the choir singing competition.

UGC earned 78 points to win $300 cash while GMS, which scored 73 percent, settled for the $200 runner up prize.

San Antonio Middle School’s Matthew Roy Alla, 12, topped the solo singing contest with Jane Nicole Mozunder of Oleai Elementary School coming in second place.

Eight-year-old Donna Rose Santiago of San Vicenter Elementary School came in third.

Angeline Faith Cacdac, Ashley Palacios, and Justin Tubera were the other contestants.

CONTIRBUTED PHOTO

Philippine honorary consul Eli Arago, second left, joins United Filipino Organization president Bong Malasarte, left, Mary Ann Jardin, third left, and other volunteers for a group photo.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Deal or No Deal host Macoi Aguda, left, talks to the banker about his offer to contestant Mary Ann Jardin.

Ruel Naval beat two other entries in the Christmas lantern-making contest, which has been held annually since UFO was formed in 1997.

Mary Ann Jardin was the lucky contestant that earned the chance to play in the Deal or No Deal contest where the top prize was $2,000.

Jardin bested 99 other contestants in the elimination round, which was a question-and-answer portion. She had the winning answer when asked who was UFO’s first president, the late Pastor Gagarin.

She picked briefcase No. 8 since it was the birth date of her goddaughter, the daughter of her best friend. The $2,000 prize was in briefcase No. 6, coincidentally the day of her birth.

Jardin’s first five choices of briefcases to be opened was a disappointing sight as most of the top amounts, including $500 and $1,000, were scratched out.

In the end she took the banker’s offer of $350 instead of sticking to her briefcase, which was worth $650.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ruel Nava, center, wins the Christmas lantern-making contest.

WOMEN

From Page 1

The 19-year-old Cabrera didn’t know she would be making history when she left her family home in Kagman to report for her first day of work at CUC Power Division headquarters in Oleai. At the time, Cabrera was simply following her interest in utility work that was sparked by watching CUC crews serve her community.

“When I was younger I saw one linemen climbing a pole at my house to install my streetlight and I was like, ‘Wow, I want to do that!’ And then I noticed there weren’t any girls so I went for it,” she said.

Cabrera was also inspired to apply by her parents, both of whom work for CUC. Her father, Edgar, is a mechanical foreman who spent the past 20 years with Power Generation, while her mother, Prisca, is a financial accounts technician with four years of service with CUC.

“She’s my baby and I’m happy for her. Working at CUC is like a family tradition. I like seeing her out there and the guys treat her how to be safe,” her father said.

Nicialynn’s mother, Prisca, echoes husband Edgar’s sentiments and says their daughter isn’t letting her male coworkers take it easy on her.

“I’m happy for her. She told me how the guys are with her. She told me she feels that she’s spoiled but then she doesn’t let that actually happen; she’ll just go out and do it with her bare hands,” she said.

While others have applied in the past, Cabrera is the first woman hired by CUC as a trades assistant, lineperson, and the proud product of Kagman High School says she appreciates the opportunity she has as well as her place in local history.

“All eyes are on me now. If I mess up, everyone’s going to know because I’m setting the pace for everyone else,” she said.

Getting hired as a lineperson is just the first step of the journey for Cabrera, as it can take as long as two and a half years to earn her certification through the Pacific Linemen Training Program. Despite the lengthy and strenuous process, Cabrera says she is up for the challenge.

“I’m willing to learn and wait. I heard it’s hard but I can do it,” she said.

As for now, a typical day on the line for Cabrera includes street light maintenance, clearing vegetation, performing visual inspections of transformers, power pole hardware, lateral lines and drop lines with the Papa 5 team under the supervision of lead man Ibut Mongami.

“It’s fun. He’s a really great teacher, he’s very patient, and if I ask him a question he’s always willing to really go into details with it. That’s why I really appreciate what he does,” Cabrera said

A 16-year veteran with CUC, Mongami and his team spent countless hours rebuilding Saipan’s power grid, primarily along Feeder 4. He is impressed with Cabrera’s enthusiasm for the job as he prepares her for the challenges ahead.

“It’s good to teach women to be on the line. She’s doing well and she’s interested in learning. It’s going to take awhile because she has to go through the training; that’s when the instructors teach them how to connect the lines, the hardware, to assemble stuff safely. Safety is the main thing,” he said.

While Cabrera is the first woman lineperson in the CNMI, she welcomes other women to share in her CUC adventure.

“I really encourage them to come out and try it out. It’s really fun; it’s hard but it’s so worth it. You see things you’ve never seen before, go to places you’ve never seen or heard of before and it’s a really great experience.”

Keeping pace

While Cabrera sets the pace for females with the line crew, Koblerville native Janice Celis is following in the footsteps of women who traded convention for fresh air as a fiscal assistant, meter reader.

Celis began her first day with CUC in October after looking for a career that would allow her to work with people while outdoors. She says working as a meter reader with CUC was the perfect fit.

“It’s a good experience to get to know the customers. We’re the first point of contact to greet the customers and they share their concerns. It’s better than doing an office job,” she said.

Though she is not the first female meter reader in the CNMI, Celis appreciates her unique status. While unfazed by having all male coworkers, Celis says she would gladly welcome more women in the ranks.

“It’s great. The guys don’t treat me any different, they treat me just like any other employees. I feel proud because I’m the only female in the department. I love my job and I know other women will love it, too, “she said.

Acting CUC executive director Gary Camacho said that Cabrera and Celis are representative of CUC’s direction.

“CUC is today’s utility and we’re moving forward. We’re an equal opportunity employer and they’re taking advantage of an opportunity that’s been available for many years. We’re all very proud of them and we encourage the men and women of our community to come in and apply for all positions if they’re interested in joining our team,” he said.

For more information, visit the CUC website, www.cucgov.org, or contact the CUC Customer Call Center at 664-4CUC (664-4282). ***(CUC)***

TINIAN

From Page 1

(Overseas) Investments, Ltd., has not paid all the required fees and pertinent requirements set forth by the TCGCC as conditions for the reopening of the casino floor.

“…the fees for the tables and slots have been paid. They paid the partial $250,000 for the annual casino license fee. The balance ($250,000), and any penalties due for late payment, must be paid by Dec. 31, 2015. They also paid the tax for August 2015,” she told *Saipan Tribune* in a phone interview last Thursday.

Blanco-Maratita refused to comment on Bishop’s statement, saying she is merely stating the facts about Tinian Dynasty’s failure to abide with the conditions set by TCGCC for the reopening of the casino.

“I am not placing any blame on the Tinian Dynasty. I am merely stating that as of today, I have not received a signed contract confirming that Spectrum Gaming is onboard and confirming that Spectrum will be arriving on Tinian before the reopening. I know that they have been in negotiations and close to completing what needs to be done to get Spectrum back on Tinian. Once that is completed, then I anticipate that the Dynasty will request for another reopening date.”

Blanco-Maratita said the fees for the gaming tables and slot machines amount to nearly $60,000.

She told *Saipan Tribune* earlier that the company’s casino operations reopening were contingent on several wage, fee, and contract-related conditions.

Blanco-Maratita conceded, though, that back wages of former employees are now in the realm of the bankruptcy court since Tinian Dynasty has already filed for Chapter 11.

AIRPORT

From Page 1

not received as of press time.

Lizama noted earlier that repairs were conducted over the weekend, thereby lifting the NOTAM or Notice to Airmen to resume full 24-hour flight operations.

According to Lizama last week, she was alerted past midnight on Friday by operations supervisor Jack Kileleman that a flight could not land because only 30 percent of the runway was lit.

Lizama said that even with the navigational aids, landing was unsafe for the plane, an Airbus 330.

The airport then began shutting down the runway electrical system to preserve and avoid circuit shorting, fluctuations and especially burning out the entire electrical system.

The CPA board approved the emergency procurement of services thereafter to find a company that specializes in electrical systems. In addition to this, the board also authorized the provisional hiring of two electricians to allow for much needed upgrades to the electrical system.

The airport runway electrical issue is the second incident this month, the first one occurring from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2.

Board ratifies acting CUC chief's appointment

By DAISY DEMAPAN
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board of directors ratified the appointment of Power Division manager Gary Camacho as acting executive director yesterday morning.

Before the board motion was approved, legal counsel James Sirok noted that Camacho's appointment will stand for 60 days or until CUC can hire a permanent executive director whose qualifications meet the requirements under the stipulated court orders needed for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency compliance.

Camacho's appointment continues where chief engineer John Riegel left off when Riegel took over the helm after executive director Alan Fletcher's resignation and eventual contract expiration in July.

Riegel, whose appointment would've ended on Dec. 13, was on leave when he was relieved of his acting executive director duties. Camacho's appointment commenced on Dec. 6 through board chair Adelina Roberto's recommendation.

The board made the belated motion to approve Camacho's appointment starting on Dec. 6 to allow for any decisions made during that time and onward as valid and unchallengeable.

As part of stipulated orders No. 1, EPA requires CUC to have a complete management structure.

Camacho gave the board an overview of the ongoing projects needed to fulfill stipulated orders.

He said the deputy executive director position has yet to be filled but that the division manager for water and wastewater has a "pending selection" and that CUC is currently updating their organizational chart to reflect the current personnel.

Legal counsel Sirok noted that the need to hire a division manager for water and wastewater is crucial, citing that water and wastewater "is the impetus of [CUC] violations."

Sirok pointed out that, although the board chooses who the executive director will be, qualifications are still determined by the stipulated orders, thereby reinforcing the need to vet and screen the backgrounds of every applicant, which has been a lengthy factor in the hiring process.

Board member David Sablan stated that there is an applicant for the executive director post but he is not aware if an offer has been made already.

Federal court issues entry of default vs Dynasty's $2.5M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI clerk of court Heather L. Kennedy has granted the U.S. government's request to issue an entry of default against the $2.5 million that the owner of Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino has agreed to pay as part of a $3.03-million settlement of a criminal case.

Kennedy issued the entry of default based on the U.S. government's request and the affidavit of assistant U.S. attorney Russell H. Lorfing, counsel for the U.S. government.

Lorfing informed the court that no one contested the U.S. government's action to forfeit Tinian Dynasty's $2.5 million and that no one has appeared to defend on behalf of the $2.5 million.

Hong Kong Entertainment (Overseas) Investments Ltd., owner of Tinian Dynasty, gave the $2.5 million to the U.S. government in the form of check last July 23 pursuant to their non-prosecutorial deal.

The new owners of HKE and the U.S. government have agreed not to prosecute the criminal case against HKE in exchange for HKE's forfeiture of $3.03 million.

The federal court dismissed the criminal charges against HKE last July at the U.S. government's request.

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De Blasio: I feel I'm part of the community

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MARK RABAGO
Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinating officer Stephen M. De Blasio points to the model house that FEMA used to show CNMI contractors and residents how to properly build a house that is impervious to typhoons.

Stephen M. De Blasio, coordinating officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and 12 of his remaining staff bid adieu to the islands last Saturday with a mixed sense of thankfulness for having been of help to the CNMI and sadness at having to part with a community that has accepted him as one of its own.

De Blasio admitted to having a heavy heart in leaving a place he's called home the past four months, an island forever grateful to him and his team for helping it recover from the disaster brought by Typhoon Soudelor.

"I arrived in Guam on the 31st of July with my team and then we flew over here immediately after the event. We flew to Guam to make sure we're very close because we want to make sure whether the storm was going to hit the island or not. [On Aug. 2 the] following morning, as soon as daybreak broke, we flew over here via rotary wing aircraft [provided by] the Department of Defense."

De Blasio applauded the federal and local coordination that clicked well right from the onset of the disaster recovery and relief effort.

"We got here immediately afterwards and we began our coordination and collaboration with acting governor Ralph DLG Torres, who was on island at the time and he's been a great partner; and of course Gov. Eloy S. Inos was here for quite a time and he too was in a tremendous leadership role to guide priorities, establish the objectives that we have to collaboratively accomplish to get the island's power back, get water flowing to the pipes, and dealing with over 600 folks that were sheltered in five different shelters across the island," he said.

De Blasio said he's appreciative of how the local community has embraced him and other FEMA personnel for their work during the disaster.

"The most fulfilling part is when people see me walking on the street or see me having breakfast, they come up to me and thank me for being here and supporting the local government in our collaborative efforts to get them back on their feet, get them on their way to full recovery," he said.

De Blasio he will also not forget the friendships he forged with CNMI government officials and the people of the community during his stay on the island.

"The relationships that I've developed with governor Inos and lieutenant governor Torres; Marvin Seman, our Homeland Security and Emergency Management director, and Vicky Villagomez, as the governor's authorized representative to approve everything we do if there's a co-share involved on the part of the local government—they have all been great and they've all been great partners."

De Blasio also had kind words for Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP). "I would be remiss if I don't mention the support we got from him. He's also been a great partner. He lobbies very hard to support the islands."

Seeing how the local community recovered from the darkest days after Soudelor has put a big smile on his face.

"Walking the streets now at night in Garapan, you just see all the lights on and the businesses open and the streetlights open. To me that's the most gratifying part. I've got to tell you, you become part of the local community if you've been out here this long. It becomes difficult to separate."

He, however, recognizes that he and his staff have to leave at some point and go back to their assignments in the U.S. mainland and elsewhere.

"And that's the hard part, but the relationships and the accomplishments that we've done with our fine partners here and the local government—that's the rewarding part and that's what keeps you going. [But I have to admit] there was some stressful and high pressure stuff, as you may know."

De Blasio also marveled at how the people of Saipan endured the disaster, with their compassion and humanity still intact.

"The people here are a vey grateful people. They're a very compassionate people. I've seen folks here step up and help their neighbors because it begins at that level. Disasters, as we say in FEMA, is they begin and end at the local level."

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Ting wins Kia Soul in D&Q raffle

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Xu Hua Ting became the new owner of a brand new 2016 Kia Soul in last Saturday's drawing of the P&G Great Car Giveaway at Joeten Susupe.

Ting's raffle ticket was picked from hundreds of entries to win the Caribbean Blue-colored subcompact crossover SUV.

More than $35,000 worth of prizes were given away during the four-month-long promo where every purchase of $20 worth of P&G products entitled one to a raffle entry.

Relito L. Delos Reyes will be receiving a $1,000 gift certificate from Joeten while Serlin Marlik and Margie Camu both won a brand new generator.

Lina Rose A. Lifoifoi is the recipient of a gift certificate worth $750, also from Joeten, while Angelo Lastimado will no longer have laundry problems after winning a brand new washer.

Sonia V. Laserna was the last Joeten gift certificate winner worth $500 while Frances V. Muña will be bringing home a 42' LG flat screen television.

Roderick Capili, Merlinda Naputi, and Georgia Salas will each be getting an iPad mini.

Five Shirley's Restaurant gift certificates worth $50 each were also given away but the names have yet to be released as of press time.

Raffle promo organizers will call all the winners who will only have 14 days to claim their prizes.

Organizers are also in the process of securing all paperwork before Ting drives home the brand new car.

The raffle drawing was attended by D&Q Saipan resident manager Max Kretzers and was aired live at KKMPI with host Gary Sword randomly calling shoppers to pick the lucky winners.

Tour buses now required to register at Commerce

Acting governor Ralph DLG Torres signed into law last Friday a bill that now requires all tour companies to register their vehicles at the Department of Commerce.

House Bill 19-41, HD 1, authored by Rep. Antonio P. Sablan, passed the House of Representatives on first and final reading last July 17. It subsequently got the Senate's nod last Oct. 29, also passing in first and final reading without amendments.

The Legislature introduced and approved the bill, now Public Law 19-28, after finding that tour companies have been maximizing profits by only registering the minimal number of vehicles under the name of the company, while using more vehicles for services they provide to their customers.

"Additionally, the Legislature finds that some of the vehicles with proper signage do not have them written in English. The Legislature finds that it is important that each vehicle belonging to our companies be registered and issued a permit by the Department of Commerce so that they will be accounted for within the Commonwealth, most especially those that provide services for profit," PL 19-28 further reads.

The measure states that while many of the tour companies have been doing business in the CNMI for awhile, it is but proper to take necessary steps to prevent them from taking advantage of certain loopholes in the local law, especially with the growth of the Commonwealth's tourism industry.

Under the new statute, the Department of Commerce will be responsible for issuing a permit number to each vehicle belonging to tour companies.

It also requires tour companies to have proper signage written in English on each of their vehicles with the permit number provided by Commerce. The law also noted that Commerce could charge a reasonable fee for each registered vehicle. ***(Mark Rabago)***

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Christmas Eve Special
World Café
Seafood & Steak Dinner Buffet with
Turkey Carving Station
December 24, 2015, Thursday
6:00pm ~ 9:30pm
$37 per adult & $18.50 per children 4 ~ 11 years old
Free flow of American Beer
Christmas Brunch
World Café
December 25, 2015, Friday
11:00am ~ 2:00pm
$37 per adult & $18.50 per children 4 ~ 11 years old
Free flow of Beer, Red & White Wine, Champagne and Juice
Free Pool passes
Christmas Dinner
World Café
Seafood & Steak Dinner Buffet with
Turkey Carving Station
December 25, 2015, Friday
6:00pm ~ 9:30pm
$37 per adult & $18.50 per children 4 ~ 11 years old
Free flow of American Beer
New Year's Eve Special
World Café
Seafood & Steak Dinner Buffet
with Ham & Suckling Pig Carving Station
December 31, 2015, Thursday
6:00pm ~ 9:30pm
$60 per adult & $30 per children 4 ~ 11 years old
Free flow of Red & White Wine, Champagne, American Beer & Juice
New Year's Countdown
with Joyful Dinner Show
"Island Style" South Beach
December 31, 2015, Thursday
6:00pm ~ 1:00am
$90 per adult & $45 per children 4 ~ 11 years old
Free flow of Red & White Wine, American Beer and Juice
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New Year's Day Brunch
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House approves bill regulating drag racing

The House of Representatives passed yesterday a bill that seeks to regulate the currently illegal sport of drag racing in the CNMI.

House Bill 19-103, authored by Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), passed on 19 affirmative votes with one absence.

It seeks to regulate drag racing on public or private property that individuals, business, or investors would like to invest in or lease for the sport.

In an amendment that passed the House yesterday, Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan) inserted caveats that the Office of the Attorney General recommended that outlaws drag racing on any public highways, streets, and other thoroughfares in the Commonwealth.

The bill also states that the promulgation of fees, rules, regulations, and penalties for drag racing activities in the CNMI will fall under the Department of Public Safety in collaboration with the OAG, Department of Public Lands, Department of Public Works, Department of Finance, and the Zoning Office.

In its findings, the House said drag racing is fast becoming a popular sport in the CNMI despite the absence of a facility or designated area to host it.

"Over the years, many individuals both young and old put themselves and others at risk [by] participating in illegal drag racing in various areas in the CNMI. The Legislature finds that it is imperative that action be taken in regards to drag racing to prevent individuals from harming themselves or others while participating in illegal drag racing activities," the bill reads.

In an opinion offered by Attorney General Edward Manibusan last Nov. 19, he said the bill virtually gives unbridled discretion to DPS to establish drag racing.

Without providing defined policy objectives, reasonable restrictions and limits, Manibusan said, there is the real possibly that the bill would encourage the haphazard development of drag racing in the CNMI, which may prove harmful to public safety and welfare.

He recommended that the bill have an outright prohibition against drag racing on any public highway or streets.

"There have been horrific traffic accidents involving drag racing on the Commonwealth's public highways that have claimed precious human lives," Manibusan added in his November letter.

H.B. 19-103 now goes to the Senate for action. ***(Mark Rabago)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Nominations open for Employer Support Freedom Award

The deadline to submit nominations for the 2016 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is on Dec. 31, 2015. Presented by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense office, the Freedom Award is the nation's highest honor presented to civilian employers for exceptional support of their National Guard and Reserve employees. ESGR encourages Guardsmen, Reservists, or family members acting on their behalf, to submit nominations at www.FreedomAward.mil. The Freedom Award ceremony is held in Washington, D.C., for up to 15 deserving employers each year in August. ***(ESGR)***

Air Force training at FDM

The U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla on Dec. 22-23 from 10am to 4:30pm. The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators are advised to stay clear of the area during the dates and times indicated. The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 10-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. ***(PR)***

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Grandvrio Resort Saipan (Grandvrio Staff House)

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Grandvrio Resort Saipan is proposing to renovate and utilize an existing 3-story building for employee quarters. This use is classified as "Institutional Residential" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. The project is located in Garapan on Lot No. 007 D 03. This is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

Date: December 29, 2015, Tuesday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, Monday, December 28, 2015 or via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp , or US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Let's Go Corporation

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Let's Go Corporation is proposing to operate All-Terrain Vehicles between Ladder Beach and Obyan Beach areas. This use is classified as "Amusement Outdoor, Intensive" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 051 L 01. It is zoned as Rural.

Date: December 29, 2015, Tuesday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, Monday, December 28, 2015 or via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp , or US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Poong Won Corporation Dba: Lavista Guest House

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Poong Won Corporation dba Lavista Guest House is proposing to operate a Motel/Hostel. This use is classified as "Hotel/Motel" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This business is located along Beach Road in Chalan Kanoa on Lot No. 474 - EA 778 (EA 778-1, EA 778-2 and EA 778-3). It is zoned as Village Commercial.

Date: December 29, 2015, Tuesday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, Monday, December 28, 2015 or via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp , or US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on Tuesday, December 29, 2015 at 5:00 PM, Zoning Board Conference Room
2nd floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Bldg.
(Tel: 234-9661 ● Fax: 234-9666 ● e-mail: www.zoning.gov.mp)

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 10/05/15 meeting minutes
5. Public Comments (not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings

Conditional Use Application #2015-4093: Poong Won Corporation dba Lavista Guest House is proposing to operate a Motel/Hostel. This use is classified as "Hotel/Motel" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This business is located along Beach Road in Chalan Kanoa on Lot No. 474- EA 778 (EA 778-1, EA 778-2 and EA 778-3). It is zoned as Village Commercial.

Conditional Use Application #2015-3818: Let's Go Corporation is proposing to operate All-Terrain Vehicles between Ladder Beach and Obyan Beach areas. This use is classified as "Amusement Outdoor, Intensive" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 051 L 01. It is zoned as Rural.

Conditional Use Application #2015-4169: Crystal Star Corporation dba Mountain UTV is proposing to operate an All-Terrain Vehicle Tour in the Rapugao/Sadog Tasi areas. This use is classified as "Amusement Outdoor, Intensive" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. The project is located on Lot No. 1330, Tract No. 22655-1, EA 801-3 and EA 801-4. These areas are zoned as Rural.

Conditional Use Application #2015-4182: Extreme Corporation is proposing to operate an All-Terrain Vehicle Tour along the public access road in the Mount Tapochao area. This use is classified as "Amusement Outdoor, Intensive" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Tract No. 21939-2. It is zoned as Rural.

Conditional Use Application #2015-3923: Grandvrio Resort Saipan (Grandvrio Staff House) is proposing to renovate and utilize an existing 3-story building for employee quarters. This use is classified as "Institutional Residential" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located in Garapan on Lot No. 007 D 03. It is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

C. Communications

D. Old Business
1. None

E. New Business
1. Correction of Technical Error Pursuant to Sections 403 and 1309 of the Saipan Zoning Law 2013 for Lot No. 018 B 101, located in Tanapag Village.
2. Office Operations Report (permits/enforcement)

F. Executive (Closed) Session

G. Miscellaneous
1. Other Matters
2. Announcements
3. Next Meeting

H. Adjourn

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogumoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Crystal Star Corporation Dba Mountain UTV

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Crystal Star Corporation dba Mountain UTV is proposing to operate an All-Terrain Vehicle Tour in the Rapugao/Sadog Tasi areas. This use is classified as "Amusement Outdoor, Intensive" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. The project is located on Lot No. 1330, Tract No. 22655-1, EA 801-3 and EA 801-4. These areas are zoned as Rural.

Date: December 29, 2015, Tuesday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, Monday, December 28, 2015 or via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp , or US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Extreme Corporation

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Extreme Corporation is proposing to operate an All-Terrain Vehicle Tour along the public access road in the Mount Tapochao area. This use is classified as "Amusement Outdoor, Intensive" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. The project is located on Tract No. 21939-2. It is zoned as Rural.

Date: December 29, 2015, Tuesday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, Monday, December 28, 2015 or via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp , or US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

McDonald's donates $1K for Karidat's toy drive

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

"Elves" began packing toys yesterday morning for Karidat's annual toy drive as community partner donations have been pouring in with Christmas only three days away.

McDonald's owner Joe Ayuyu donated $1,000 to the toy drive to benefit families in need and to lift the spirit of those who continue to experience the after effects of Typhoon Soudelor.

Karidat executive director Lauri Ogumoro said that about 50 families comprising over 200 children and occupants at the women's shelter will be the recipients of the toys.

"The community has been very generous with helping us out. We were a little worried at the beginning that we weren't going to get enough toys but all of a sudden there's an avalanche of toys," she said.

Today, Tuesday, will be the cutoff date for donations.

"We're very thankful to McDonald's and all the people who have supported us throughout the year and especially through Typhoon Soudelor. It's going to be a very important Christmas for everyone," Ogumoro said.

Many families lost so much this year and the toy drive serves to bring them some holiday cheer, she added.

Ayuyu said he is happy that Karidat continues to be of great help to the community despite its many challenges.

"You know, if there's anybody that really needs help, it's [Karidat]. I'm always happy to at least help [them] in a small way…" he said.

DAISY DEMAPAN

Karidat executive director Lauri Ogumoro and staff accept a $1,000 donation from McDonald's for their annual toy drive yesterday morning. The toy drive is set to end on Tuesday to allow enough time for toy distribution to over 200 children.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
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Oleai Sports Complex Track and Field Renovation

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, through the Northern Mariana Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, hereby give notice that NMHC is soliciting sealed bids from interested, licensed companies to provide Construction Services for the **Renovation of the Oleai Sports Complex Track and Field** in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island.

Prospective Bidders or firms may pick up a set of the Project Package beginning **Wednesday, December 9, 2015** at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI and austerity holidays. E-mail of the Project Package set will be allowed and a non-refundable payment is required. A non-refundable payment of **Fifty Dollars ($50.00) is required for each set.** Payment shall be by cash, credit card, money order or cashier's check (payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation).

Bidders are also advised that this project is subject to compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act. All wage rates for laborers, mechanics and all other employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid the current minimum wage or the wage determination for the Commonwealth as specified in CM130001 for the Mariana Islands.

A **mandatory pre-bid conference** will be held at **10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 6, 2016,** at the NMHC Conference Room in Garapan, Saipan. A project site visit will be made as part of the mandatory pre-bid conference for the prospective bidders to familiarize themselves with the required work. Attendance at this pre-bid conference and site visit are considered essential to the prospective bidders' understanding of the project elements and a prospective bidder or company that does not have a representative in attendance at the mandatory pre-bid conference will be considered as a non-responsive bidder.

All inquires shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Jesse S. Palacios, Corporate Director, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or faxed to (670) 234-6866. Inquires must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. local time, December 28, 2015.

Sealed Bids must be marked **NMHC IFB 2016-001**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director, Procurement and Supply, Lower Base Drive, Saipan, no later than **10:00 a.m. local time, Friday, January 22, 2016.** Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00a.m., local time, January 22, 2016 and must be the transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com For bidders located outside of the CNMI, an original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S Postal Service or the official government postal service no later than **Friday, January 22, 2016** and the ITB documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base Drive no later than **Tuesday, February 2, 2016**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicity opened and read aloud at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at **10:00 a.m. ,local time, Wednesday, February 3, 2016.** However if no noticed of intent to bid are received from bidders outside of the CNMI, the bids will be opened at **10:30 a.m., local time, Friday, January 22, 2016.**

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00), a bid security of fifteen percent (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. This security may be in the form of a Certified Check, Cashier's Check, or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC), with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check. Surety companies must hold a Certificate of Authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable le to the Attorney General.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference" is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funding for this project.

The bidder submitting the lowest responsible bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the lowest CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIAC Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract price. Pursuant to Governor's Directive 251 dated March 15, 2006, bidders are required to include a Clearance from the Office of the Insurance Commissioner with respect to the financial bonding capability of the bidders' chosen Surety.

Performance time for completion of this project is One Hundred Fifty (150) calendar days. Liquidated damages will be assessed at One Hundred Twenty Five Dollars (US$125.00) per calendar day for delays beyond the established completion date.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds provided to the commonwealth. This project is also subject to section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds and the contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the business that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible".

NMHC hereby notifies bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, women and small business enterprises will be affordable full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

All documents received shall be the sole property of the NMHC with the exception of the Bid Bond, Certified Check, or Cashier's Check, which will be returned to the proposers after the acceptance and award of contract to the successful contractor.

The Government reserves the right to reject and all proposals and to waive and defects in the said proposals, if in the sole opinion of NMHC, to do so would be in its best interest. All proposals will become the property of the Government.

For information, contact Mr. Jesse S. Palacios, Corporate Director or Mr. Jacob Muna, Planner/Environmental Officer at (670) 234-6866/7689 during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI and austerity holidays.

/s/ Edward C. Sablan
NMHC Board Chairman & Contracting Officer

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Division of Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447/234-7689/234-7670 • Fax. (670) 234-9021
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

December 15, 2015

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Governor
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 237-2200 or (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after December 31, 2015, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following projects and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
Kagman Community Park	Extension and restoration of the existing court to meet NCAA standards, new paint, construction of perimeter fence, installation of solar powered lighting system, construction of small scale covered bleachers, installation of playground equipment, installation of concrete picnic tables, installation of outdoor fitness equipment.	Kagman, Saipan	$150,000.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan and may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by December 31, 2015, will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Acting Governor Ralph DLG. Torres consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of fifteen days following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Honolulu Field Office, 1132 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Ralph DLG. Torres
Acting Governor

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXV, Issue No. 253

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EDITORIAL

The GOP contenders' schoolyard brawl

Carly Fiorina projected herself as Margaret Thatcher. Jeb Bush projected himself as mostly ineffective. Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and Donald Trump argued with one another like junior high school kids who think they're the smartest ones in the room.

Yes, it was another entertaining debate of the GOP's best and brightest. You know, the people who are vying to be the next leader of the free world.

One indelible image of the night came during the junior varsity debate among the five men who are clinging to something other than rational ambition. Their poll numbers continue to anchor the lowest region of the charts. The topic of the evening in both debates—foreign policy, national security and what to do about Islamic State terrorists—was certainly in Sen. Lindsey Graham's wheelhouse. The topic actually is the only thing in Graham's wheelhouse, and one of the evening's most surreal moments came as he reiterated his main theme. The U.S. has to go kill the terrorists before they come over here and kill every one of us, he exhorted time and again. He delivered that line once more with a squeal and a vertical bounce for emphasis. Like a manic jack-in-the-box, that is.

The Las Vegas debates probably did little to move any candidate's needle before the turn of the year and the coming of the Iowa caucuses.

It's hard to see Bush advancing in the polls after another inconsistent performance. He scored a few darts against Trump—"you can't insult your way to the presidency," he said in some form more than once, perhaps making his speech writers proud. But then he fumbled the landing with a wandering and squishy closing statement.

Cruz and Rubio both probably solidified their positions as viable challengers to the leading man, Trump. Yet each exposed weaknesses of the other that they will have a hard time explaining away.

Trump's continued ploy of bluster, egotism, detail avoidance and shallow one-liners surely will soon begin to take its toll. Surely? Trump's inherent negativity—we're all a bunch of losers—will certainly, eventually undermine his projection that only under his administration can we win again. Whatever winning means.

And Ben Carson continued to curry the notion that he is wholly unqualified to lead the nation in this time of peril and need.

Ultimately, no one can argue that this spectacle of a presidential campaign hasn't made 2015 a rather special, if not depressing, year in American politics.

(c)2015 The Kansas City Star (Kansas City, Mo.)

Are you safer now than you were 4 years ago?

By JOEL MATHIS and BEN BOYCHUK
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

The recent attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Calif., have caused Americans to reassess the country's safety, with fear approaching levels not seen since right after 9/11: Polling shows that President Barack Obama's approval numbers have dipped to new lows—and one poll this week shows just a third of Americans approve of the way he has handled militant groups like the Islamic State.

Fifteen years after 9/11, have we gotten any safer? Or do recent attacks show the threat is greater than ever? Joel Mathis and Ben Boychuk, the RedBlueAmerica columnists, debate the question.

JOEL MATHIS

The world is an unsafe place. President Obama isn't perfect. But yeah, America has been safer with him in charge.

All you need to make that determination is one metric: Body count. Simply put, far fewer Americans have lost their lives to violence under Obama than under his predecessor. Some of that is luck, but much of it is a result of the choices both presidents made.

George W. Bush had the bad luck to be president when Osama bin Laden directed the 9/11 attacks on America. But Bush was dismissive of a memo—"Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S."—just a month before the attacks. Bin Laden and Mohamed Atta are the bad guys in that story, not Bush, but a stronger reaction might've saved a few lives in New York, Washington D.C., and Shanksville, Pa.

One other choice Bush made: To invade Iraq. It was a country that had not attacked us. It did not—as it turned out—possess weapons of mass destruction with which to threaten us. But the Iraq War claimed thousands of American lives, unnecessarily, and claimed tens of thousands of Iraqi lives, with ripple effects (like the Islamic State) that haunt us to this day. Whatever else you want to say about Bush, the era over which he presided didn't feel very safe.

Let's be fair: Obama has certainly benefited from some of the security measures Bush put in place after 9/11. But he's also tried to be cautious, to avoid doing dumb things that squander American lives in the service making himself, and the country he serves, seem oh-so-macho. He has resorted to diplomacy in places—like Iran—that Republicans seemed to eager to invade and squander even more lives.

That is why he has the contempt of Republicans, of course, who prefer their foreign policy loud and furious—and who, not incidentally, are getting Donald Trump as the front-runner for their party's nomination. Does that make you feel safer? No? It's what the GOP has to offer.

Me? I'd rather stick with a president who makes the wiser—safer—choices.

BEN BOYCHUK

Safer? Well, if you care to peruse the statistics, your odds of being attacked by a terrorist remain roughly 20 million-to-1. You have a better chance of being struck by lightning, dying in a fire or drowning in a bathtub.

But actuarial tables are of little comfort to the families of the victims of the San Bernardino attacks or to the grieving parents of the high school student who was struck and killed Tuesday by a city-owned truck in Los Angeles after the LA Unified School District shut down in response to a bogus terrorist threat.

Safer? We've learned over the past week that the Department of Homeland Security doesn't look at the social media activity of foreigners applying for visas as a matter of policy. But DHS will routinely examine the Facebook and Twitter activity of American citizens.

Think about that. The gargantuan bureaucracy created to preempt terrorist threats against the country deliberately avoids looking at information that foreigners share publicly on their Facebook timelines. According to ABC News, "Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson refused in early 2014 to end the secret U.S. policy that prohibited immigration officials from reviewing the social media messages of all foreign citizens applying for U.S. visas, according to a former senior department official."

Why in the world would they do that? Johnson reportedly feared a "civil liberties backlash" and "bad public relations" for the Obama administration.

Mind you, these are the same people who assure us that the Syrian refugees will be thoroughly vetted.

Safer? China and Russia have made Swiss cheese of federal and state government databases. Beijing hackers "compromised" (read: stole) the files of more than 22.1 million current and former federal employees, including people with top-secret security clearances. Apparently, this had been going on for years before the geniuses at the Office of Personnel Management noticed the breach. You don't suppose the Chinese only plan to mess with their credit scores, do you?

Safer? President Obama continues to insist that climate change is the prime mover of Islamic jihadism—except he won't actually say "Islamic jihadism" or any variation on the term.

We are probably about as safe as we ever were in a world full of uncertainty. But it's tough to feel safe when public-relations worries trump national security.

Ben Boychuk (bboychuk@city-journal.org) is associate editor of the Manhattan Institute's City Journal. *Joel Mathis (joelmmathis@gmail.com) is associate editor for* Philadelphia Magazine. *Visit them on Facebook: www.facebook.com/benandjoel.*

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Can 1 million women be wrong?

By ED DIENER, SARAH D. PRESSMAN AND SONJA LYUBOMIRSKY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Do happier people live longer? An article in the British medical journal *Lancet* made headlines this month claiming the answer to that question is no. The researchers based their conclusion on data from the Million Women Study in Britain, and it contradicts a large body of research, not to mention conventional wisdom. Because it was a large study, and the *Lancet* is a well-regarded publication, the message seemed definitive: Happiness doesn't matter for your health.

But the *Lancet* study is far from definitive. Happiness does matter for your health. A lot. The data the researchers analyzed are indeed interesting and potentially valuable. The Million Women Study surveyed women, ages 50 to 69, on multiple issues and followed them for 10 years. More than 846,000 of the participants answered a question about happiness, and after a decade of follow-up, 4 percent of them had died. So far, the researchers say the data show that among healthy, first-world women in their 50s, happiness does predict who will die in their 60s, but this effect evaporates once you statistically account for numerous other factors. We believe there are methodological concerns about the study that call this finding into question.

First, the happiness measure used in the *Lancet* study is weak. In well-crafted research, social scientists think carefully about question and answer design, the ordering of items and how many questions are too many before the participant gives up and stops answering or stops answering honestly.

The Million Women Study asked just one happiness question: How often do you feel happy (from "rarely/never" to "most of the time"). A better approach would have been to ask the question in more ways, with a broader range of positive emotions for participants to choose from.

What's more, the happiness question was the 306th item in a 316-item survey. After answering so many questions about medications, diet and health history, a respondent might be a lot less happy than when she started, and a lot less cooperative. In fact, about 400,000 women in the Million Women Study apparently quit before reaching this question.

If that's not sufficient to show that the approach was flawed, consider this: The study also looked at other psychological factors associated with health, and it showed that none of the ones measured in the same way as happiness—with one question and late in the survey—affected longevity either. One of those factors was stress, yet stress is a noncontroversial, established correlate of nearly all health problems. If the study's stress measure doesn't show a relationship to longevity, the researchers might question whether their measures of other psychological factors, including happiness, are acceptable.

The key to the *Lancet* study is its statistical analysis of the data. The average participant was 59 when she enrolled in the Million Women Study. The women self-reported their health (from "poor" to "excellent") at the beginning of the study, and the authors then applied statistics to these data to counter the possibility that the participants' health itself was what was influencing their happiness, rather than vice versa. This makes sense, but it changes the nature of the question being answered. After all, a woman's happiness for the first six decades of her life could have affected her health, yet the analysis essentially took that out of the picture, as though the middle-aged subjects were a blank slate. The authors' question, then, was "Does happiness at 59 predict life span beyond its effects during the first six decades?"

We also have concerns with the authors' choice to statistically control so many other variables. In our work, we hypothesize that the key ways positive feelings influence health are through changes in behaviors. For example, research has shown that positive individuals sleep better, smoke less and exercise more, all of which are known to predict longevity. Thus, when the authors control for all these variables, they are taking away a major path through which happiness is likely to influence longevity. This is like trying to determine whether a hurricane causes damage after controlling for its wind speed. Again, the question is changed, from "Will happy people live longer" to "Will happy people live longer if we take away their healthier behavior?"

Similarly, the authors "held constant" variations in factors such as income, having a romantic partner and religiosity, and yet variations in these factors are likely to be associated with happiness and better health. Controlling for such factors takes away a major part of why happiness is good for us.

Finally, this analysis of the Million Women Study should not be taken out of context. Other studies—some with more objective health measures and longer periods of follow-up—have found robust links between happiness and longevity. Consider the famous Nun Study: Although it had a much smaller sample than the Lancet study, it started when the nuns, all living in similar conditions with similar diets, were 22 and followed them until death. It found that happy nuns survived considerably longer than less happy nuns.

This finding is consistent with dozens of other studies, including laboratory research. Cleverly designed investigations have shown that feeling positive is associated with living longer with HIV, cancer and heart disease, and is even tied to a decreased chance of catching a cold after being exposed to the virus.

So can a million women be wrong?

We believe what the authors of the *Lancet* study found was not whether happiness is related to longevity but this: Whether a one-item happiness question will predict a shortened life in healthy middle-aged women, if you delete how happiness has affected their health for their first six decades and if you erase the influence of key pathways to health such as social support, smoking and body mass index. Before we judge the true meaning of this research, we plan on waiting to see the effect of happiness once the study is complete, and we have data on many more of the million women (not just 4 percent of them).

We are happy researchers, and so we plan to be around when that happens.

Ed Diener is a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia and the University of Utah, and senior scientist at the Gallup Organization. Sarah Pressman is an associate professor of psychology and social behavior at UC Irvine. Sonja Lyubomirsky is a professor of psychology at UC Riverside and author of The How of Happiness. *They wrote this for the* Los Angeles Times.

Embracing the bliss of rejecting reality

By REG HENRY
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Having grown grayer and crankier in becoming more senior than thou, I have lately wondered whether I should become a conservative, which with some honorable exceptions seems to be the most popular philosophy among the old and chronically agitated.

While I am not sure I could sustain the required level of ill feeling, nor watch Fox News regularly to keep my sense of grievance at boiling point, I do admire one feature of the conservative mindset: the rejection of reality, especially as defined by empirical evidence from scientific inquiry.

Who do these scientists think they are? These white-coated elitists with their beakers, gases and soluble solutions are always telling the rest of us uncomfortable facts, such as the climate is changing with likely disastrous consequences for the planet.

What a bore! I don't want to hear any climate change doom from reality-respecting scientific know-it-alls. I want to enjoy the luxury of blissful denial in the face of the facts. In short, I want to become a conservative.

Of course, anybody can see that the weather has changed over the past 20 years—you don't even have to wear a white coat. Little Nelly and Her Dog understand that the world's climatic conditions have gone seriously goofy.

Parts that are usually warm are cold and parts that are normally cold are warm.

The increasingly erratic weather, with its biblical storms, floods and droughts, is either due to climate change as predicted or the planet has taken to drinking large adult beverages, possibly methane cocktails with lots of little umbrellas.

But last week, Mark Twain's famous observation that "everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it" was challenged in Paris, where 195 countries reached accord on a climate change pact. Those darn scientists made the world get real about reality.

Weather, of course, is not technically climate and Mark Twain probably never uttered the quotation attributed to him. But the analogy is close enough for government work, which is what this was.

The Paris agreement is only a start in saving the planet. For that to happen, certain politicians—yes, those amazing, reality-defying conservatives—will have to experience a sea change in thinking—perhaps due to the sea rising and actually lapping their feet. By then, of course, it will be too late.

This seeming shortsightedness is rooted in the fact that the climate change naysayers hate and distrust government and all its works. They also detest President Barack Obama, who they decided was a socialist before he had done a single thing.

As it happens, I am not yet so decrepit of brain to share these particular conservative attitudes. I like a functioning government—I think a modern society demands it. It's either the government or the corporations that will rule us—and I get to vote only for the government.

I also note that since Obama's election none of us are wearing Mao suits and the government has not nationalized anything, not even in the field of health care. In fact, an arguably socialistic single-payer system was rejected early in favor of one in which large private insurance companies operate for profit.

Yet I do love the ability of conservatives to reason backward. They don't start with the world community—195 nations!—agreeing with the overwhelming scientific opinion that something has to be done to arrest climate change.

No, they start with the belief that Obama is a socialist who wants to destroy the free enterprise system. Therefore, following reverse logic, climate change can't be real. It must be an Obama conspiracy. Of course, they find outlier scientists to agree with them, but this isn't about the science at all.

I like that. As a conservative, I would be able to jettison my own beliefs if they prove inconvenient. For example, conservatives preach personal responsibility but not when it comes to planetary climate change. It can't possibly be man-made, no sir, hundreds of years' worth of pollution can't be the cause.

It takes commendable nerve to dismiss climate change as a conspiracy. Most of us learned in high school that a plan for a wild prank with more than 10 participants will fall apart because some kid will inevitably blab. If climate change is a conspiracy, it is the most remarkable one in history—195 participants, all agreeing, none blabbing.

Yes, I'd like to be a conservative, but I think I'll buy some rubber boots instead, just in case we find ourselves all at sea, hot and bothered.

Reg Henry is a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette *columnist. Readers may email him at rhenry@post-gazette.com*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Trump is no cure

Mary Tomokane's idea that Donald Trump is the cure for our nation's ills is like suggesting that arsenic is the way to cure a common cold. Yes, your cold will be cured, but the long-term consequences may not be what you want.

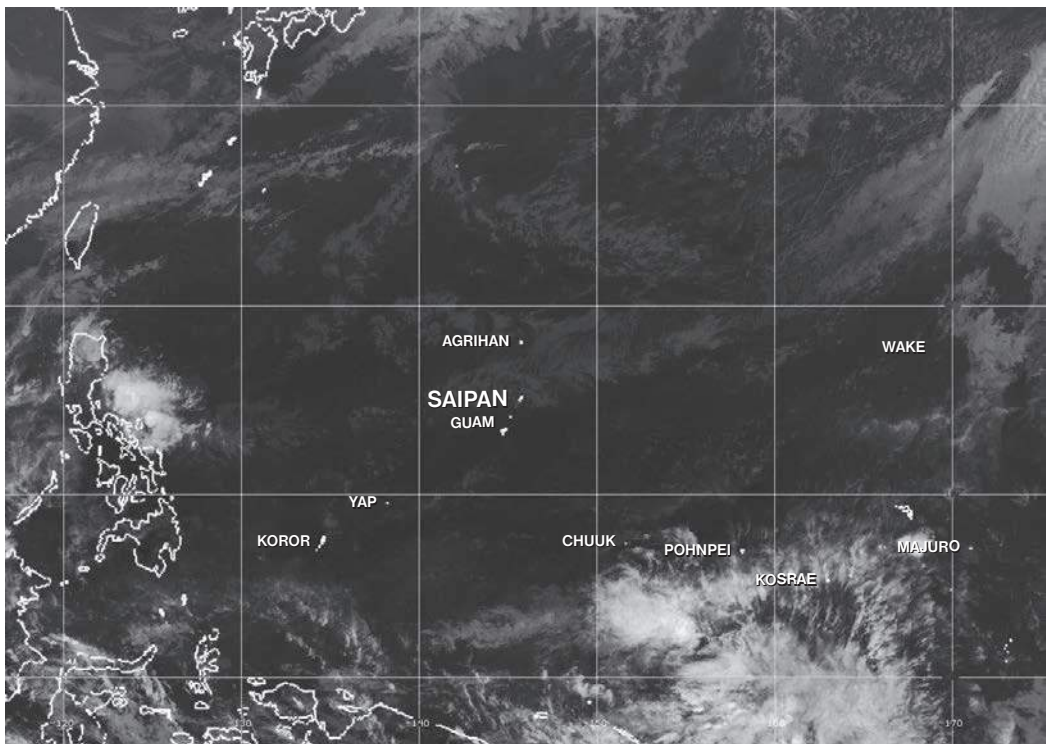
Michael A. White
Dandan, Saipan

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼75°	▲85° ▼74°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Shear line north of Wake Island extends from 25N170E southwestward to 19N158E through the Northern Marianas Islands near Anatahan to 15N141 and farther west to 13N130E. Cloudiness and patchy rain are present along and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary. An upper-level trough east of Wake island is enhancing showers and isolated thunderstorms within 100 miles of a line from 16N170E to 25N175E. A near-equatorial trough extends eastward from 2N130E to beyond the date line at 1N. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms lie south of Chuuk and Pohnpei or south of 6N from 151E to 166E and within 60 miles of a line from 2N142E to 4N151E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼78
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼78
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼78
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲74	▼59
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲42	▼22
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲72	▼67
Honolulu	Windy	▲82	▼73
London	Showers	▲59	▼48
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲65	▼52
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼71
Melbourne	Sunny	▲79	▼57
Miami	Thundershowers	▲82	▼75
New York	Cloudy	▲55	▼52
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲58	▼43
Paris	Cloudy	▲57	▼54
Pusan	Sunny	▲57	▼44
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲62	▼42
Salem	Rain	▲49	▼39
San Francisco	Rain	▲59	▼56
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼31
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲58	▼41
Washington, DC	Showers	▲62	▼52

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:30 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
10:39 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
4:25 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
11:47 PM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.3 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Wednesday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Thursday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Saturday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	3:05 PM	3:04 AM
Wednesday	3:57 PM	4:04 AM
Thursday	4:52 PM	5:03 AM
Friday	5:49 PM	6:02 AM
Saturday	6:45 PM	6:58 AM

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5072/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2924/159	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

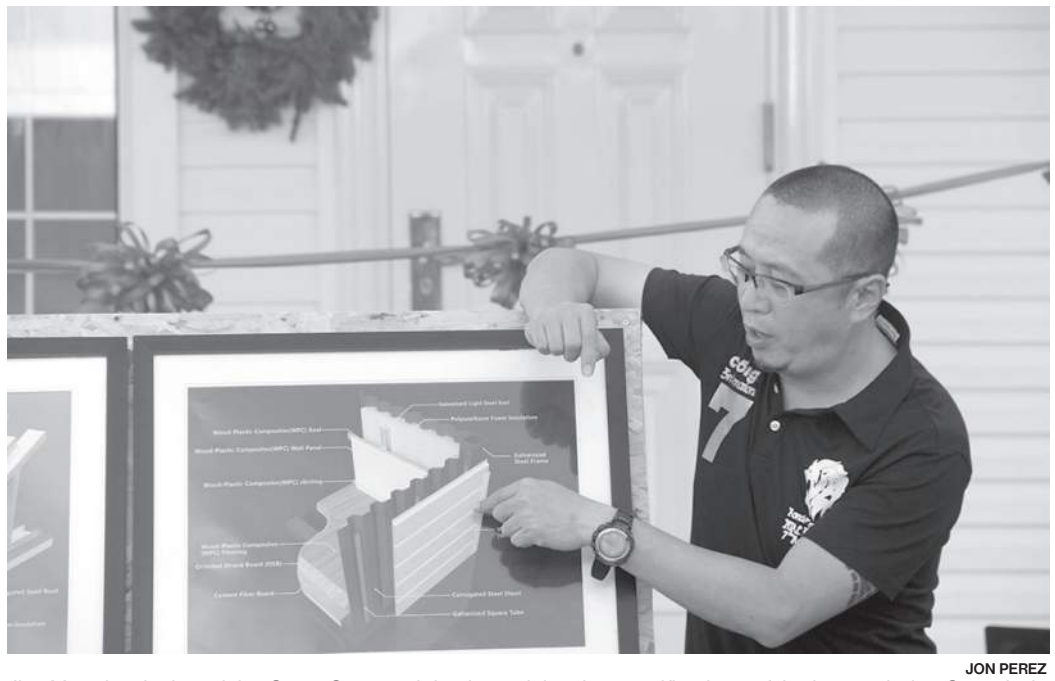
ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

GreenStay housing project promotes prefab homes

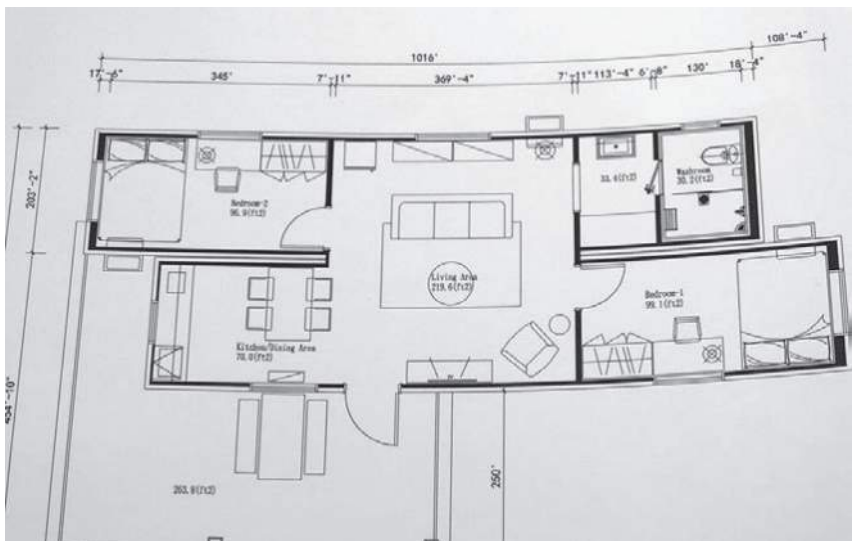
JON PEREZ

The GreenStay model unit is located at the Garapan Fishing Base across Kristo Rai Church and is now open for viewing.



JON PEREZ

Jiao Yu, who designed the GreenStay model unit, explains the specifications of the house during Saturday's unveiling at the Garapan Fishing Base.



DAISY DEMAPAN

The building layout for the GreenStay project proposes an environmentally friendly and typhoon-proof structure. The prefabricated showroom is open to the public for viewing at the Garapan Fishing Base.

DAISY DEMAPAN

GreenStay's community design plan.

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The GreenStay project, a brainchild of Skywalker Communications, gave the public on Saturday a first hand look at a prefabricated home, with the unveiling of a model unit at the Garapan Fishing Base.

The showroom tour began with participants filling out an intake poll "to get a better understanding of housing specifications and needs for the people living in the CNMI."

The specifications included options for one bedroom to four bedrooms, one bathroom to three bathrooms, a "dirty kitchen" option, size options for a two bedroom from 500 square feet to 1,100 or above and size options for a three bedroom starting from 700 sq. ft. to 1,300 or above.

The intake poll did not offer any other option for home sizes but noted six options for "affordable range to pay": from $60,000 to $80,000, $80,000 to $100,000, $100,000 to $120,000, $120,000 to $150,000 and $150,000 and above. For house furnishings, the options were for full furnishing, partial furnishing, no furnishing, and "others."

According to showroom guide Cyril, all furnishings, including the module home, are imported directly from China. He stated that the lifespan of the home is up to 50 years, under the best circumstances and by following the proper care guide. He shared that Skywalker, which also does real estate business in China, will provide repair services for the module homes.

When asked to clarify whether the homes are made out of shipping containers, Cyril said the technology is similar but that the home is actually a steel frame.

"This is different. This is not a container. Containers can be easily bended but this is a steel frame," he said.

When built for permanent use, the module home sits on a concrete footing, but the structure is still transportable and can be removed should a future homeowner need to move to a different parcel of land.

Cyril said the homes are not a new concept. They are found all over the world and are seen in many places in Asia and Europe.

He also explained that the module home uses polyurethane foam insulation. This insulation is fitted between the galvanized steel frame and wood-plastic wall panels. The exterior of the home is fitted with wood-plastic composite boards while the roof is made up of a separate corrugated steel frame that sits outside the steel frame shell, with asphalt adhesive shingles for heat proofing. The interior of the home is composed mostly of the same wood-plastic composite paneling.

He said the homes are energy efficient, durable, and "built to withstand harsh weather [to] protect all components inside," that the homes "are weatherproof and can take a knock or two without significant damage," and are resistant to fire, termites and mold. The home also feature typhoon-proof windows, heat preserving walls, a water heater and plumbing fixtures for washers and dryers.

Cyril stated that the homes themselves are much better than concrete homes because they are environmentally friendly.

He noted that the model house is between 900 to 1,000 sq. ft. inclusive of patio space and that the showroom is actually "smaller" than the actual size because the company wanted to quickly open the showroom to the public to get feedback.

He said the model home took two weeks to build, cost $40,000 for shipping and has an option for a two-story design.

Part of the GreenStay project is to create a modular home community complete with a mall, a hospital, a gym, a post office, a theater and a hotel.

When asked about financing options, he stated that interested clients would have to go through the bank for approval but that they are hoping for at least 30 to 50 unit purchases first to save on shipping and reduce costs. He said the unit is not yet available for low-income residents but that discussions with the government to provide low-income housing are ongoing, specifically for the homestead program, to provide housing in the future.

Cyril stated that a three-bedroom option is coming soon but that other design options are available for interested homeowners.

For more information on the homes, call 234-7942 or visit Suite 204 at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

THANK YOU!

Herman's Modern Bakery gave gifts of Herman's goodies to the Colorado linemen as a way of saying thank you and *si yu'us ma'ase* for their help and assistance in the recovery efforts after Typhoon Soulder.

Island Snapshots

ETC DONATION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Last week, Michael T. Demapan, general manager for Saipan Stevedore, second from right, stopped by Mount Carmel School to make an Education Tax Credit contribution to the school. On hand to receive the contribution were school president, Galvin Deleon Guerrero, second from left, school Student Council president, Thomas Manglona II, far right, and Student Council vice president, Markel Toves, far left.

HOLIDAY PARTY CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pacific Amusement Inc. employees held their Christmas party at the Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret last Sunday. The party is also attended by PAI president Jitprapha Gebhard, who is set to leave for Thailand tomorrow.

REUNION MARK RABAGO

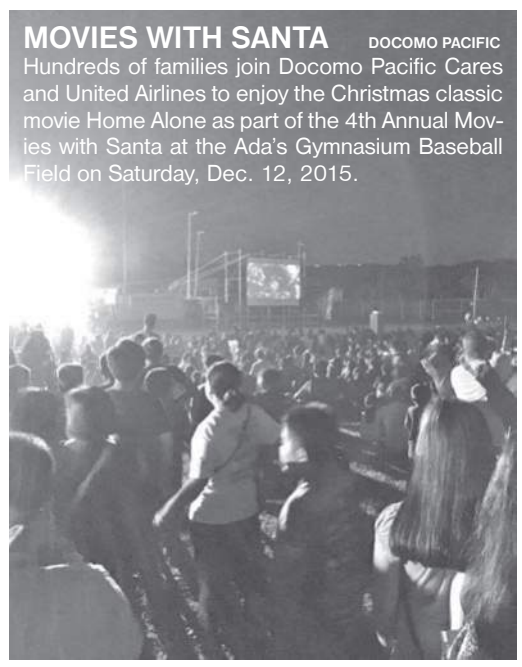
San Antonio Elementary School's very first principal Francisco Mendiola Sablan poses with his former students, former House floor leader Anna Teregeyo, right, and Rose Sablan last week after the House of Representatives presented Sablan with a resolution honoring and commending him for his many years of loyal service to the field of education.

NEW SHEFA BOARD MEMBER JON PEREZ

Francisco Diaz Cabrera, right, shakes the hands of Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang after the former's oath-taking ceremony last week at the Mayor's Office in Chalan Laulau. Cabrera was sworn in as a new member of the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance board.

MOVIES WITH SANTA

Hundreds of families join Docomo Pacific Cares and United Airlines to enjoy the Christmas classic movie Home Alone as part of the 4th Annual Movies with Santa at the Ada's Gymnasium Baseball Field on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015. DOCOMO PACIFIC



MOVIES WITH SANTA DOCOMO PACIFIC

Hundreds of families join Docomo Pacific Cares and United Airlines to enjoy the Christmas classic movie Home Alone as part of the 4th Annual Movies with Santa at the Ada's Gymnasium Baseball Field on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015.

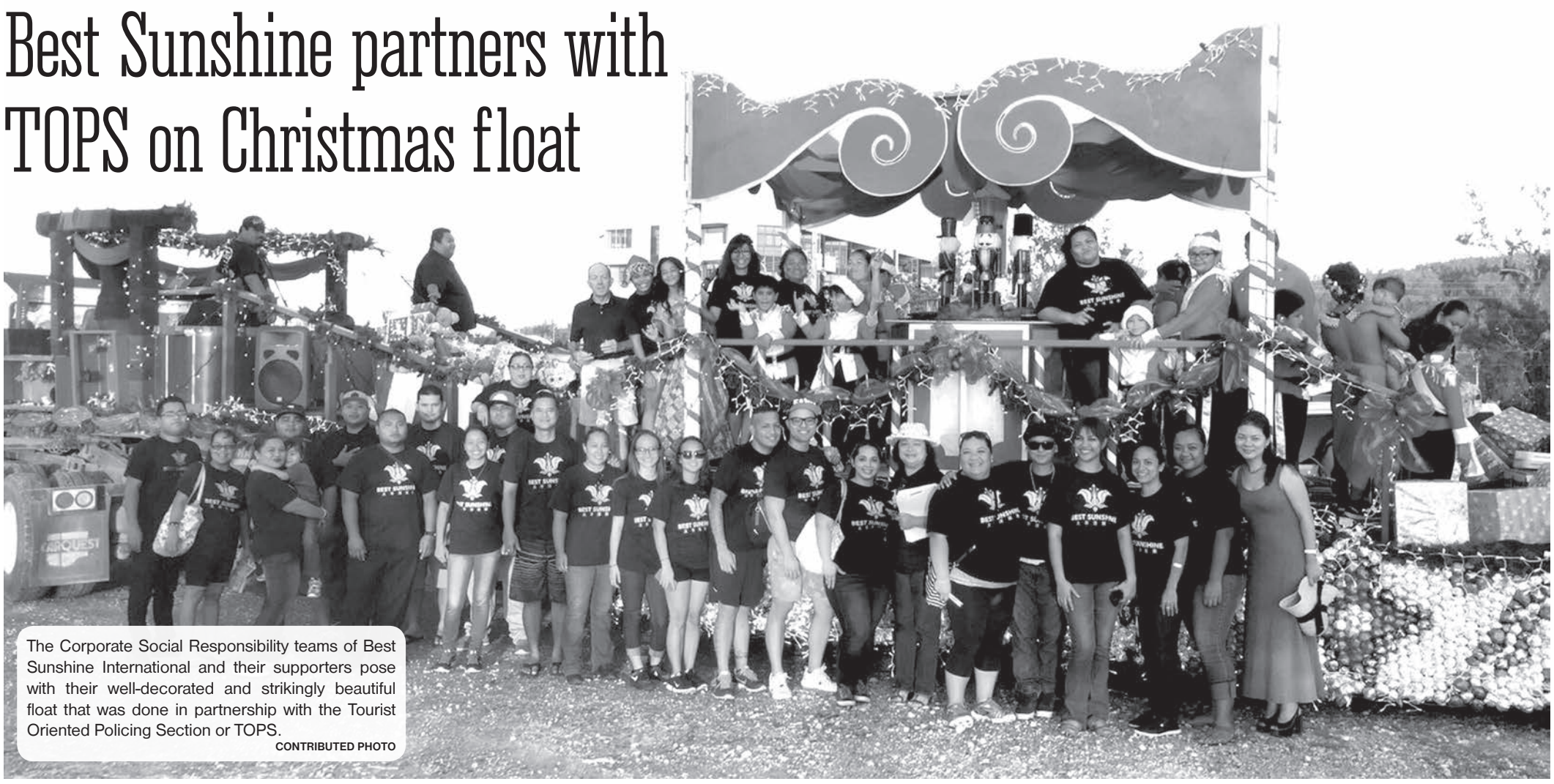
DPL BOARD MEMBER

Henry Hofschneider, right, signs his oath of office as Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang looks on after the former was sworn in as a member of the Department of Public Lands advisory board. JON PEREZ

SPREADING CHRISTMAS CHEER CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pastor Wayne Gillespie of the Salvation Army, far left, joins the management of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan for a group photo with their donation to be served as an early Christmas lunch. Fiesta Resort & Spa donated food to the Salvation Army as well during the aftermath of Typhoon Soudelor. Also shown in the picture are volunteers from the Salvation Army.

Best Sunshine partners with TOPS on Christmas float



The Corporate Social Responsibility teams of Best Sunshine International and their supporters pose with their well-decorated and strikingly beautiful float that was done in partnership with the Tourist Oriented Policing Section or TOPS.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The colorful and brightly-lit BSI-TOPS float was a jaw-dropper during last Saturday's Christmas in the Marianas float parade.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CSR-TOPS team prepare to decorate their non-competitive float.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Christmas spirit filled the air last Saturday as beautifully embellished Christmas floats lined the streets of Garapan for the Christmas in the Marianas float parade. Colorful and brightly lit floats representing the holiday season brought Christmas cheer to onlookers.

Best Sunshine's corporate social responsibility team and the Tourist Oriented Policing Section or TOPS partnered to create the largest non-competitive float for the Christmas in the Marianas float parade. The partnership between CSR and TOPS is dedicated to the revival of the Koban project and the float's design was centered on promoting the return and revamp of the TOPS program.

Rita Chong, BSI corporate social responsibility director, said, "We already have an established partnership in place with TOPS. Together, we are currently working on a project here in Saipan to revitalize the tourist district in western Garapan. As part of our partnership, we made an agreement that for every event taking place in Garapan, we would collaborate with TOPS."

The CSR team and TOPS participated in multiple activities such as Christmas caroling, decorating the "Christmas Village," and building the largest non-competitive Christmas float for the annual parade, as well as assisting with the program every Saturday night. A few of the CSR members also assisted TOPS in decorating their lobby for the DPS Decorating Battle, which won them first place.

Members of CSR and TOPS worked alongside each other to organize, plan, and create a float made from recyclable and donated materials. Donated wooden palettes, outdated newspapers, old fabric, and toys were turned into Christmas embellishments as the float slowly came together.

"We've established partnerships in the past, but nothing has met the caliber as big as this," said Sgt. Jeff Olopai, commander of the DPS Criminal Bureau of Investigations. "We are thankful that Best Sunshine's CSR team has been helpful and we look forward to working with them on future plans."

Chong responds, "They're really fun to work with. They are highly professional people, and great role models for my staff. These people help keep our neighborhoods safe and free from criminals. We are coming from two different worlds in regards to profession, but we have meshed really well together because we share the same vision with regard to the tourist district. Our two organizations have established a close friendship and you really see that positive interaction when we get together to work on a project. It has been a pleasure working with them." ***(PR)***

TOY DRIVE

From left: The CNMI Women's Association board of directors chair Rep. Felicidad Ogumoro, board members Doris Drew and Erna Ngirchongor, Marianas Entertainment & Saipan Entertainment office manager Juanit Takai, CNMI Women's Association program administrator Debra Inos, board vice chair Jovita Taimanao receive on Dec. 17, 2015, the Christmas toys that they intend to distribute to disadvantaged children. The association gives special acknowledgement to Victoria Scott of Mariana Entertainment & Saipan Entertainment.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Asia

91 missing from landslide that buries buildings in China

BEIJING (AP)—At least 91 people were missing Monday, a day after a massive landslide buried dozens of buildings when it swept through an industrial park in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen.

The official Xinhua news Agency said the landslide buried 33 buildings in the industrial park in Shenzhen, a major manufacturing center in Guangdong province across the border from Hong Kong.

Xinhua said that as of Monday morning, 59 men and 32 women were missing in the landslide.

Shenzhen's public security bureau posted a notice online Monday saying that at least 59 people were missing. No deaths were reported.

Xinhua said an area of more than 60,000 square meters (650,000 square feet) was covered with up to 6 meters (20 feet) of mud, according to geological experts at the site.

Li Yikang, the deputy secretary general of the Shenzhen city government, said at a televised news conference that more than 900 people had been evacuated. He said that nearly 1,500 people were involved in rescue efforts.

State broadcaster China Central Television, or CCTV, said that there was a residential area next to the industrial zone, and that the buildings buried included two workers' dormitories.

Ren Jiguang, the deputy chief of Shenzhen's public security bureau, told CCTV that most people had been moved to safety before the landslide hit.

The Beijing Youth Daily, citing a local resident, reported that the soil that slid down onto the area had been piled up against a 100-meter (110-yard) -high hill after being dug up in the past two years in construction work.

State media carried photos of what looked like at least one five-story building leaning over and partly crumpled in the industrial park, and a sea of brown soil covering a vast area around it.

39 rescued, scores missing as waves sink Indonesian boat

MAKASSAR, Indonesia (AP)—Rescuers have pulled out 39 survivors and three dead from a passenger boat that sank in central Indonesia after being buffeted by high waves, and were battling bad weather Sunday to reach scores of others still missing.

The fiberglass ferry was on its way from Kolaka in Southest Sulawesi province crossing the Gulf of Bone to Siwa town with 110 passengers and 12 crew, when it was overwhelmed by waves more than 3 meters (10 feet) high during stormy weather on Saturday afternoon, said Roki Asikin, head of the search and rescue agency in Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi.

Six rescue boats and ships were sent from Kendari and Makassar after they received a distress call from the crew who reported that the vessel was starting to take on water about 21 kilometers (13 miles) southeast of Siwa port in Wajo district, Asikin said. The passengers included 14 children, he said.

Earlier Sunday, fishermen found four people, including a woman and a child wearing life jackets. They told authorities that their boat sank hours after being hit by high waves.

Transportation Ministry spokesman Julius Barata said 35 other survivors and three dead were discovered later.

He added that the four who were found earlier Sunday were taken to Port Hospital in Siwa, while the others were on their way to another hospital in Kolaka Utara district.

Television footage showed dozens of family members anxiously waiting for their loved ones at the Siwa port.

Indonesian boat accidents have killed hundreds of people in recent years. Boats are often overcrowded and safety regulations are poorly enforced. The vast country spans more than 17,000 islands with a population of 250 million, and boats are a popular and relatively cheap form of transportation.

Minor convicted in India gang rape released after 3 years

AP

Members of Indian students organization ABVP shout slogans as they protest the release of a juvenile convicted in the fatal 2012 gang rape that shook the country in New Delhi, India, Sunday, Dec.20, 2015.

NEW DELHI (AP)—A man convicted as a juvenile in the fatal 2012 gang rape of a young woman aboard a moving bus in India's capital ended his three-year term in a reform home Sunday, as angry protesters demanded that he remain in detention.

The man was short of his 18th birthday when he and five others brutally attacked the 23-year-old woman in a case that shocked India, where sexual violence against women is rampant.

Several activists and politicians have demanded that he not be released until it can be proven that he has been reformed. Scores of protesters Sunday were led by the parents of the woman who was attacked.

On Friday, the Delhi High Court rejected a petition to extend the man's term, saying that he has served the maximum sentence allowed under the law. India's top court is set to hear another such petition Monday.

News reports said the man was moved Sunday from the reform home where he had been kept to a new home under the care of a children's rights group.

Police eventually broke up the protests Sunday, removing the demonstrators from central New Delhi in buses.

The December 2012 attack in the heart of New Delhi sparked outrage across India and highlighted the issue of violence against women in the country.

The woman and a male friend were returning home from seeing a movie at an upscale mall when they were tricked by the attackers into getting on the bus, which the men had taken out for a joyride.

The attackers beat the victim's friend and took turns raping her. They penetrated her with a rod, leaving severe internal injuries that led to her death two weeks later.

Four men were convicted of rape and murder in an unusually fast trial for India's chaotic justice system, and legal appeals against their death sentences are pending in the Supreme Court. A fifth man involved in the case died in prison.

The four adults who went to trial confessed to the attack but later retracted their confessions, saying they'd been tortured into admitting their involvement.

In response to the attack and the widespread public protests it provoked, India's government rushed through legislation doubling prison terms for rapists to 20 years and criminalizing voyeurism, stalking and the trafficking of women.

The case also ignited a debate about whether minors who commit especially horrific crimes should be tried as adults.

New legislation to lower the age for young people to be tried as juveniles from 18 to 16 is currently stuck in India's Parliament.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Jet fighter crashes at Indonesian air show; 2 dead

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—An Indonesian jet fighter taking part in an aerobatic show crashed and burst into flames Sunday, killing two pilots. No one on the ground was injured. The KAI T-50 Golden Eagle, a U.S.-South Korean-made light attack aircraft, spun out of control and crashed into an air force base complex near Adi Sutjipto Airport in Yogyakarta, a tourist destination city on the main island of Java, according to a witness, Jawardi, who goes by a single name. He spoke to MetroTV. The crash occurred on the second day of an air show celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Air Force Flight School in Yogyakarta, said Air Vice Marshal Dwi Badarmanto, an air force spokesman. The pilot and co-pilot—both Indonesians—died instantly, and an investigation team has been sent to the crash site, he said.

South Koreans hold new rally against conservative president

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Blowing horns and banging on tambourines, thousands of South Koreans marched in Seoul on Saturday to protest the arrest of a labor union leader who may face a rarely used sedition charge over the eruption of violence at an earlier anti-government protest. The demonstration was the latest in a series of mass protests in recent months of conservative President Park Geun-hye. She has been criticized for her increasingly harsh treatment of union members and dissidents resisting her drive to make labor markets more flexible. The demonstrators, also carrying banners and handheld signs and shouting for Park to step down, marched through downtown streets as large groups of police officers moved along and kept them at close watch.

US Embassy in Pakistan warns of possible terror attacks

ISLAMABAD (AP)—The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad said it has received information on possible terrorist attacks in the Pakistani capital in late December, warning Americans to avoid busy public places during the Christmas and New Year holiday period. "Possible targets include places of worship and shopping centers," the US embassy said in a statement, without giving specifics of the information that led it to issue the warning on Friday. Pakistani police and other officials were not available Saturday to comment on the warning. However, a Pakistani intelligence official said there is a "general threat perception" but no specific threats.

India's Sonia and Rahul Gandhi appear in court in graft case

NEW DELHI (AP)—Sonia Gandhi and her son, Rahul Gandhi, the top two leaders of India's opposition Congress party, appeared in court Saturday to face corruption accusations that the party says are politically motivated. The Gandhis are accused of illegally acquiring the assets of the parent company of the National Herald, a newspaper once run by their family. They have denied the allegations, calling them a vendetta against them by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. The accusations against the Gandhis and some of their supporters come from Subramanian Swamy, a BJP member. Saturday's hearing at a New Delhi district court, the first legal step stemming from Swamy's allegations, was swift. Sonia Gandhi, the Congress party's president, and her son, the party's vice president, were granted bail of 50,000 rupees ($754), Kapil Sibal, a Congress lawmaker and lawyer, told reporters.

Ethnic protesters, police clash in southern Nepal; 1 dead

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Police opened fire on protesters who were attempting to attack a police station in southern Nepal on Sunday, killing one, officials said. Government administrator Ram Raja Subedi said at least 18 police officers were injured in the clashes with hundreds of ethnic Madhesi protesters Sunday in Gaur, a town about 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of Kathmandu, Nepal's capital. Subedi said the protesters attempted to attack the police station by throwing rocks, sticks and bottles. He said police first shot tear gas and opened fire in the air, but had to fire on the protesters to contain them, killing one. The situation was still tense later Sunday, and authorities imposed an indefinite curfew in the town.

World

Notorious Lebanese militant killed in Syria airstrike

BEIRUT (AP)—A Lebanese man convicted of one of the most notorious attacks in Israel's history and who spent nearly three decades in an Israeli prison has been killed by an Israeli airstrike near the Syrian capital, the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah group said Sunday.

Hezbollah officials have pledged to avenge the killing of Samir Kantar, sparking fears of escalation in an already volatile region. In a possible first response, three rockets were fired into Israel from Lebanon late Sunday.

Kantar had said that he had been working, with the backing of Hezbollah, to set up "the Syrian resistance" to liberate the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in 1967 and annexed 14 years later.

Hezbollah said Kantar was killed along with eight others in an airstrike in Jaramana, a suburb of the Syrian capital Damascus, on Saturday night. According to Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV, two Israeli warplanes entered Syrian airspace and fired four long-range missiles at the residential building in Jaramana. It aired footage of what it said was the building, which appeared to be destroyed. Kantar's brother, Bassam, confirmed his "martyrdom" in a Facebook post on Sunday.

Kantar

In Lebanon Kantar is known as "the dean of Lebanese prisoners," a reference to his long jail sentence.

In Israel, he gained notoriety for the kidnapping and grisly killing of a man named Danny Haran and his 4-year-old daughter, in the coastal town of Nahariya. Kantar was 16 at the time, and a member of the Palestinian militant group the Palestine Liberation Front.

He also killed a policeman during the attack, and is alleged to have beaten the four-year-old to death with a rifle butt. As the attack unfolded, the girl's mother hid inside a crawl space inside their home and accidentally smothered their crying two-year-old daughter, fearing Kantar would find them.

Kantar was imprisoned in 1979 in Israel and sentenced to three life terms, but was released as part of a prisoner swap with Hezbollah in 2008. While many in Israel were outraged at his release, in Lebanon he received a hero's welcome and the following year he was awarded Syria's highest medal by Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Israel and Hezbollah are bitter enemies. The two countries battled to a stalemate during a monthlong war in 2006 during which Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into Israel and Israel's air force destroyed wide areas in Lebanon. Since then, Israeli military officials say Hezbollah has upgraded its capabilities and now possesses tens of thousands of rockets and missiles capable of striking anywhere in the country.

Many Israeli officials believe Hezbollah is currently in no position to open a new front with Israel, as it is bogged down aiding its close ally, President Assad, in the Syrian civil war.

Nevertheless, Hezbollah legislator Ali Ammar vowed to avenge Kantar's killing, saying the militant group will not allow his blood to go "betrayed." Ammar said the group's military arm would determine the timing and methods chosen "to punish the killers, specifically the Israeli enemy."

In January, the Lebanese group accused Israel of carrying out an airstrike on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights, which killed several Hezbollah members and a prominent Iranian general. Around ten days later, Hezbollah militants fired a salvo of missiles at an Israeli military convoy in a disputed border area, killing two soldiers and triggering deadly clashes that marked the most serious escalation since the 2006 war.

Gil Rabinovich, the former head of the Israeli military intelligence's counterterrorism unit, said it was impossible to predict how Hezbollah would respond, in part because Israel has not claimed responsibility for Kantar's killing. He noted however that Kantar was not a member of Hezbollah's "inner circle," reducing the probability that the group would open a new front against Israel.

"He's important, but not so important to endanger them in a situation where they might be in direct conflict with Israel," Rabinovich said.

Sudanese refugee recounts forced deportation from Jordan

CAIRO (AP)—Ahmed Doury and his wife had fled their home in Sudan's Darfur region for safety in Jordan. But after Jordanian security forces violently rounded up and deported them and other Sudanese asylum seekers, the 32-year-old says he's now more determined than ever to go to Europe.

"I will take the sea ... I will get out of here by any means necessary," he said Sunday, adding that it was the only thing he could think about on the flight back to Sudan.

Speaking by telephone from the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, he recounted the deportation to The Associated Press with a solemn voice.

Doury had gone to Jordan in 2014, fleeing death threats for his tribal and ethnic ties in the war-devastated Darfur region. He registered as a refugee with the United Nations and worked intermittent menial jobs in the Jordanian capital, Amman, to support himself and his wife.

AP

In this picture dated Dec. 2, 2015, a Sudanese woman holds her child in front of a tent pitched outside the U.N. refugee agency headquarters in Amman, Jordan.

Feeling discriminated against by authorities, the two joined a makeshift camp outside the U.N. headquarters where other Sudanese were living. On Wednesday, Jordanian security forces stormed the camp, tore it down and forced the asylum seekers onto vans headed to the airport.

The camp's proximity to the U.N. headquarters had given the group a false sense of safety, he explained.

"We have no trust in the U.N. anymore after what happened. No one did anything to help us," Doury said, echoing a view widely held among Sudanese refugees in Jordan.

"Everyone was beaten ... they stepped on the people who fell down," he said. The troops marched in early in the morning, swearing and indiscriminately beating its inhabitants with rubber and electric batons, he said. They fired tear gas and rubber bullets and at one point shoved a pregnant woman to the ground. She fell, broke a leg and went into labor, he said.

Once dispersed, the Sudanese were driven to a holding bay near the country's international airport in vans "so crammed, (they) were barely able to breathe." Although all the asylum seekers were in metal or plastic handcuffs, Jordanian security continued to beat them at the holding area, and the trauma caused another pregnant woman to go into labor, he said.

On Friday, they were put onto planes taking them back to Sudan.

Preliminary results: Slovenians reject same-sex marriage law

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia (AP)—Slovenians rejected same-sex marriage by a large margin in a referendum on Sunday, according to near-complete results, in a victory for the conservatives backed by the Catholic Church in the ex-communist EU nation.

The results released by authorities show 63.5 percent voted against a bill that defines marriage as a union of two adults, while 36.5 percent were in favor.

Slovenia's left-leaning Parliament introduced marriage equality in March, but opponents pushed through a popular vote on the issue. The "Children Are At Stake" group has collected 40,000 signatures to challenge the changes before any gay couples were able to marry.

"This result presents a victory for our children," said Ales Primc, the group's leader.

Ljudmila Novak, from New Slovenia, described the outcome as a "clear defeat" of the leftist government, which backed the changes.

Supporters of same-sex marriage have called for Slovenia to join Western European nations that have allowed more gay rights. Conservatives and the right-wing opposition have campaigned on traditional family values, arguing that marriage equality paves the way for gay and lesbian couples to adopt children.

Although Slovenia is considered to be among the most liberal of the ex-communist nations, gay rights remain a contentious topic in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation of 2 million.

Voters in the former Yugoslav republic rejected granting more rights to gay couples in a referendum in 2012.

Violeta Tomic, a lawmaker from the United Left party which initially put forward the bill, said referendum results presented a temporary setback only.

"It's not over yet. Sooner or later the law will be accepted," she said.

The Slovenia vote illustrates a cultural split within the European Union in which more established western members are rapidly granting new rights to gays, while eastern newcomers entrench conservative attitudes toward the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Igor Zagar, a 55-year-old professor from the capital, Ljubljana, said he voted in favor of marriage equality to "support the secular state and against the interference of the church into political issues."

Gregor Jerovsek, a 40-year-old mechanic from Ljubljana, said he believed that "the family should not be a field for experimentation."

"A traditional family should remain the key value of our society," he said.

WORLD BRIEFS

Niger arrests more military officers in alleged coup attempt

NIAMEY, Niger (AP)—Nine military officers involved in planning what Niger's government has said was an attempted coup have been arrested and will face a military tribunal, the country's interior minister said Sunday. The arrests took place after a month-long surveillance operation, said Interior Minister Hassoumi Massaoudou. The plan was foiled thanks to the loyalty of some soldiers who kept the government informed, he said. "The officers behind this attempt will be presented before a military court," he said. "The investigation is just beginning." The coup was planned to take place this week during celebrations of the country's independence from France, Massaoudou said.

Seychelles president wins 3rd term in office

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—The state-run Seychelles News Agency says President James Michel has narrowly been re-elected to a third term in office in the Indian Ocean archipelago. The agency said Saturday that Michel won with 50.15 percent, or 31,512 of the votes. His opponent, the Seychelles National Party leader Wavel Ramkalawan, received 49.85 percent, or 31,319 of the votes. Both candidates had failed to get the more than 50 percent required to win the first round two weeks ago. The 71-year-old Michel, the leader of the ruling Parti Lepep, or People's Party, has been in power since 2004.

Belgium detains 1 person as part of Paris attacks probe

BRUSSELS (AP)—Belgian authorities investigating their country's links to last month's attacks in Paris have searched a house in Brussels and detained an unidentified person for questioning. Federal prosecutor Eric Van der Sypt said the search was continuing Sunday evening. The building is located between the center of the Belgian capital and the Molenbeek district where some of the perpetrators of the Nov. 13 attacks, included suspected ringleader Abdelhamid Abaaoud, had lived. Van der Sypt declined to provide details of the search or the person detained, but said authorities are still trying to establish what connection they may have to the attacks in the French capital in which 130 people died. The Belgian prosecutor said that once more is known, an official statement will be issued on Monday.

Overdrive

2016 Tacoma holds high ground in the midsize segment

By TERRY BOX
THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Mean-spirited midsize pickups shook me into a denim and tie-dyed froth in the '70s .

I looked like some sort of wobbly hippie-dippy milkshake when I poured myself out of those trucks—and that was after just a 10-minute trip to the grocery store.

My first puny pickup—a tinny, mustard-colored '77 Datsun that I bought after extended exposure to the Grateful Dead and Elvis Costello—bounced and vibrated so badly that I could not see out of its rearview mirror.

The past just didn't exist in that truck.

Seven years later, in another really smooth move, I bought a Chevy S-10 that at least provided a better seat for getting trampolined.

Even with an optional V-6 engine and five-speed manual, though, that slacker couldn't pull a pack of Twinkies off a grocer's shelf.

So call me skeptical about the recent resurgence of the midsize pickup segment, prompted mostly by the splashy arrival of GM's well-conceived Chevy Colorado and GMC Canyon trucks.

Look, full-size pickups still offer far more of everything than the midsizers—which evolved from the clang-and-bang compacts I owned—and these days, they can squeeze out fuel economy almost comparable to the midsizers.

But now with the arrival of the mostly new 2016 Toyota Tacoma, I'm starting to get it.

Think lifestyle and footprint.

Midsizers are hefty but smaller than a garage, possess some of the amenities and relative sophistication of a full-size, can haul and tow reasonable loads, and are somewhat easier to live with.

The truth is some people outside Texas just don't want a giant Silverado or F-150 or Ram occupying most of their driveways.

The extremely orange Tacoma TRD Pro Off-Road model I had recently didn't look much smaller than Toyota's full-size Tundra, but it was shorter and narrower and moved more nimbly through traffic.

Like the creaky model it succeeds, the new Tacoma looks a bit exaggerated—a Toyota trait these days—but in a familiar way.

Its blunt, trapezoid-shaped grille seemed larger than ever, complemented by big headlamps and a long, flat hood that, as a whole, formed a glaring presence up front.

A 3.5-liter V-6 replaces the old engine in the 2016 Toyota Tacoma, providing some of the polish found in full-size pickups with a smaller footprint. TNS

As a double cab, the four-wheel-drive Taco offered four large doors and lots of fairly flat sheet metal on its sides, livened up some by a well-placed character line down low.

With black cladding around the wheelwells and knobby, off-road-style 265/70 tires on mostly gray wheels, the truck appeared plenty ready for the meek urban challenges I could throw its way.

To my eyes, the new Tacoma, which rides on the same basic chassis as the old truck with similar dimensions, looks a bit smaller and slightly less stylish than GM's midsizers. But in the real world, the Taco continues to dominate the midsize segment, outselling the Chevy and GMC trucklets combined and staying far, far ahead of the ancient Nissan Frontier.

The big news with this $37,000 truck is its 3.5-liter V-6, which replaces the tired 4-liter V-6 that I think has powered the Taco since George W's boots started scuffing up the White House.

Though the new engine is somewhat smaller, it produces 278 horsepower, a substantial 42 more than the old engine.

Moreover, it is smoother and more refined, continuing the recent trend among midsize trucks to provide some of the polish found in full-size pickups.

The engine pulls well from stops, generating good low-end torque and a decent exhaust note. And with Toyota's unusual combination of port and direct fuel injection, the Taco can muster 18 miles per gallon in town and 23 on the highway.

While fairly lively for a 4,500-pound pickup, the Tacoma needs to be spurred hard for serious acceleration, responding to a heavy foot with an estimated 8-second run to 60 mph. The engine is tied to a well-sorted six-speed automatic that nonetheless left me wondering why cash-rich Toyota didn't step up and offer an eight-speed automatic in the new truck.

It could have been a marketing plus.

At 278 horsepower, the Taco has about 30 fewer horses than the V-6s in the Colorado and Canyon, and it can't tow quite as much—6,400 pounds vs. the GM twins' 7,000.

But that may be less relevant than the fact that the Tacoma seems to ride about as well as the GM trucks, rolling over city streets with heavy-footed firmness but no shudders or harshness.

As you might guess, the Taco felt a bit clumsy going around corners, but real pickups are built to move up and down, not side to side, cowboy. Likewise, the steering felt fairly numb, but that's pretty common in a truck.

Besides spending time under the hood, Toyota devoted a lot of attention to the interior, which previously looked about as hard and desolate as a West Texas oil town. Plastic surfaces still dominated my truck's black interior, but a 7-inch display screen teched up the square-shaped dashboard.

My truck also featured interesting orange trim around the center stack.

Knobs below the screen controlled the air-conditioning and heat as well as the differentials—and Toyota gets points for that.

For those deeply into selfies, the Tacoma even had a mount near the rearview mirror for a GoPro camera so you can videotape your stunned expressions as you charge off the side of a 20-foot bluff.

Remember: Smile between the expletives.

Meanwhile, the black cloth seats in my truck were stitched in orange, and the plastic door panels featured black cloth inserts to soften the armrests. In addition, the truck had a classy black headliner that almost offset the limited legroom in back.

It's easy to like the new Tacoma because it does many things reasonably well.

But the GM twins will soon get optional four-cylinder diesel engines that will open up even bigger gaps in towing capability.

Already, a couple of credible magazines have selected the GM trucks over the Taco in comparison tests. And Ford is likely to enter the midsize segment soon with a fully developed truck currently being sold in other markets.

If I were driving the Taco at Toyota, I'd keep my eye on the rearview mirror, which affords a clear view in this truck.

That pack of pickups in back may be gaining on it.

NUTS & BOLTS

AT A GLANCE: 2016 Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro Off-Road

- Type of vehicle: Five-passenger, four-door, four-wheel-drive pickup
- Price as tested: $37,610
- Fuel economy: 18 miles per gallon city, 23 highway
- Weight: About 4,500 pounds
- Engine: 3.5-liter V-6 with 278 horsepower and 265 pound-feet of torque
- Transmission: Six-speed automatic
- Performance: 0 to 60 mph in approximately 8 seconds

UNDER THE HOOD

Car repair shop ripped me off! What to do?

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Q: You just wrote a column about leaving air conditioning repairs to the experts.

Well, I recently went to my local shop because my car was having trouble starting. There was no reason for anyone to look at my air conditioning.

A few days after I got my car back, I tried turned on the air conditioning, and it was gone. Dead. Nada.

It was absolutely fine before I had taken it in. I called and asked if the mechanics could have damaged the air conditioning while working on the car.

"Absolutely not," was the reply. They were nowhere near the air conditioning in my 1999 Mustang, they said.

They were, however, happy to give me a quote for new air conditioning. As was another shop.

Finally, after many issues with the first shop, we took the car to the dealer, who called to say that a prong had been stuck in our connector. It had damaged the connector, so I would need a new one. So, we bought one, and lo, the air conditioning was fine.

My question to you: Since everyone I have talked to says there is no way that prong got there by itself, should I go to the authorities with my complaint about the local shop? Aside from messing up my air conditioning, they did a poor job on my start issue. As far as I'm concerned, they're crooks.

It's really hard to find a reliable shop, and the dealer is very expensive. What should I do?

A: Oh boy! Sometimes car repair can really be a headache. When you called the first shop to tell them the air conditioning wasn't working, did they offer to have you bring it in so they could verify the cause? If they simply blew you off on the phone, that doesn't speak well for their integrity.

In a case like this, perhaps they could have said, "Bring it in. We'll check it out. If it's something we did, we'll fix it. If the fault is not related to the repairs made, we'll show you why and provide an estimate to fix it. You would need to pay for the diagnostic time and repair."

How anyone can give a quote for "new air conditioning" is beyond me, as a repair to the existing system, with a possible component replacement, would be the normal course of action.

I'm assuming by "prong" you may be referring to a test pin inserted into the back side of an electrical connector. Done carefully, this is an appropriate way to sample the voltage of a circuit passing through the connector. This is a hugely better method than unplugging the connector because the circuit remains active during testing. If such a tool is of inappropriate shape or forced into the connector, it could cause damage to the terminal inside or wire connected to it.

It's tricky to say if the prong was inserted by the first repair shop's technician without knowing if the connector was related only to the air conditioning system or part of a larger wiring harness. Harness connectors can have perhaps a dozen or two circuits passing through them, of very diverse purposes. For example, the crankshaft position sensor circuit may pass through a certain connector, and the air conditioning compressor clutch circuit is the next door terminal within the same connector. It's possible the wrong terminal may have been accessed, and the tool was inadvertently left behind. The California Bureau of Automotive Affairs looks into these matters on a routine basis and tries to find an equitable solution. Questions their investigator might ask are if previous air conditioning repairs had been performed, which connector is this, where is it located, and certainly a lot more, once facts become better understood. You can view the process and file a complaint online at: www.dca.ca.gov/webapps/bar/complaints.php.

Brad Bergholdt is an automotive technology instructor at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, Calif. Readers may send him email at under-the-hood(at) earthlink.net; he cannot make personal replies.

Life & Style

Miss Universe mistake crowns Colombia before Philippines

By ANNETA KONSTANTINIDES
DAILYMAIL.COM

Steve Harvey announced the wrong winner of the Miss Universe 2015 pageant on Sunday night—and the crowd watched in heartbreak and horror as the crown had to be removed from the head of one contestant and placed on another.

Miss Colombia had been wiping away tears of joy as the $30,000 blue diamond and topaz crown was placed upon her head and she was named Miss Universe 2015, winning the title for her country for the second year in a row.

But her glory only lasted for two minutes.

Just as Ariadna Gutierrez was blowing kisses and waving to her adoring fans she was informed, on live television, that it was actually Miss Philippines Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach who was meant to be wearing the crown.

Steve Harvey strolled up on stage, the shame already evident on his face, when he told the crowd, "Folks, I have to apologize."

"The first runner-up," he then announced. "Is Colombia."

Miss Philippines stared wide-eyed at the audience, her lip quivering as Miss USA whispered into her ear and she realized what exactly those words meant.

"Miss Universe 2015," Harvey then dramatically clarified, "Is Miss Philippines."

Wurtzbach joined Gutierrez on stage and stared into the audience in shock, Miss Universe 2014 Paulina Vega giving her fellow countrywoman a comforting pat on the back just minutes after they had shared a victorious embrace.

"Folks let me take control of this," Harvey told the sea of boos and cheers.

"This is exactly what's on the card," he then said, displaying the results on the camera.

"I will take responsibility for this, it was my mistake," he continued.

Former Miss Universe Paulina Vega, center, takes away the flowers and sash from Miss Colombia Ariadna Gutierrez, left, before giving it to Miss Philippines Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach, right, at the Miss Universe pageant Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015, in Las Vegas. AP

"I can show it to your right here, the first runner up is Colombia, it's my mistake, still a great night. Please don't hold it against the ladies."

And then came for the heartbreaking moment when Miss Colombia had to bend down, allowing Vega to remove the crown and place it on Miss Philippines' head instead.

The telecast then came to an abrupt stop, cutting without credits or allowing Miss Philippines to take her first walk as Miss Universe.

"I'd like to apologize wholeheartedly to Miss Colombia & Miss Philippines for my huge mistake. I feel terrible," Harvey wrote in a tweet following the broadcast.

"Secondly, I'd like to apologize to the viewers at that I disappointed as well. Again it was an honest mistake."

"This was a terribly honest human mistake and I am so regretful."

"I don't want to take away from this amazing night and pageant. As well as the wonderful contestants. They were all amazing," he continued to tweet, before once again "emphatically" apologizing to Gutierrez and Wurtzbach.

■■■

The newly crowned Miss Universe from the Philippines is apologizing on behalf of the Miss Universe organization for the mistake that led a contestant from Colombia to first believe that she had won the crown.

Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach told reporters after the Miss Universe pageant that she had conflicting emotions when the mistake happened: joy when she was told she was indeed the winner and not first runner-up, concern for Colombia contestant Ariadna Gutierrez Aravelo, who had previously been mistakenly crowned, and confusion at the whole situation.

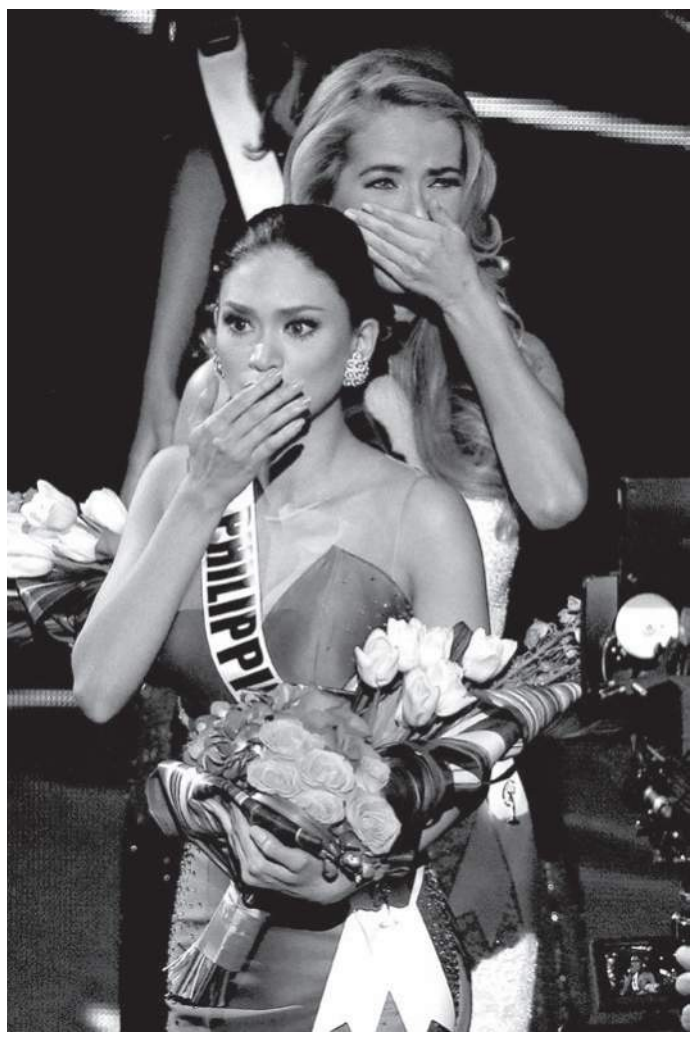
Wurtzbach says she tried to approach Aravelo onstage afterward but the Colombian was crying and surrounded by a crowd of women. She says she realized it was, "probably bad timing."

Saying she's now the voice of Miss Universe she apologized for what happened on behalf of the organization.

She says the mistake wasn't done purposely and "it was an honest mistake."

Miss Universe host Steve Harvey says no one feels worse than he does about his mistake awarding Colombia the crown before Miss Universe.

Other contestants congratulate Miss Philippines Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach after she was crowned Miss Universe at the Miss Universe pageant Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015, in Las Vegas. AP



Miss Philippines Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach, front, reacts after she was announced as the new Miss Universe at the Miss Universe pageant on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015, in Las Vegas. AP

Harvey spoke to reporters assembled at the Planet Hollywood hotel-casino where the pageant concluded with him awarding the crown to the wrong person.

Mark Shapiro of the pageant's new owner, WME ' IMG, says Harvey corrected the mistake on his own when he realized the error on air.

Both say it was human error.

The beauty pageant ended Sunday night with the contestant from Colombia having the crown removed from her head and placed on the contestant from the Philippines after Harvey mistakenly read that she had won when really she was the first runner-up.

Harvey says he hasn't spoken with Miss Colombia. ***(AP)***

■■■

Harvey's mistake was the final twist in the three-hour pageant that sometimes felt more like a reality show.

The host revealed at the beginning of the show that for the first time in Miss University history the audience would have a voice, their real-time votes added to the scores of the judges, actress Nicey Nash, blogger Perez Hilton, former Miss USA Olivia Culpo and football player Emmitt Smith.

But it wasn't until Harvey read the name of the top three that he shared that there was actually one more secret judge. The 77 women who they had spent the last three weeks in Las Vegas with, who now stood behind them, would have a say as well.

"Sure hope you've been nice for the past three weeks," Harvey said.

The pageant began with the beloved national costume competition, where a number of women stacked on the feathers on their extravagant looks to represent their countries.

Miss Austria honored Conchita Wurst, the pop star and drag queen who won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2014 for the country, even drawing on Thomas Neuwirth's famous beard.

Spain dressed as Don Quixote, the title character in Miguel de Cervantes' famous novel, and Miss Thailand dressed as an open air Tuk Tuk cab to honor her country's chosen mode of transportation.

And Miss France, who was inside the stadium changed her costume to create a statement following the Paris attacks, covering her body in silver peace signs that glittered on her body.

Miss USA and third runner up Olivia Jordan also put on a patriotic display, dressing as a red, white and blue bald eagle with wings that spanned eight feet in a costume designed by Adam Selman, who created Rihanna's infamous see-through dress.

The top 15 included women representing Indonesia, the Dominican Republic, the island of Curacao, Belgium, Venezuela, South Africa, Mexico, Thailand.

Also rounding out the group of women was Miss Australia, a Bosnian war refugee, and Miss Japan, who was the first ever biracial candidate to represent her country in the pageant.

'Star Wars' blasts opening weekend record with $238 million

LOS ANGELES (AP)—To say that the force is strong with this one is an understatement.

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens" brought in a galactic $238 million over the weekend, making it the biggest North American debut of all time according to studio estimates on Sunday.

The Walt Disney Co. earnings destroy the previous opening record set by Universal's "Jurassic World," which drew $208.8 million this summer.

Internationally, the film brought in $279 million, bringing its global gross to $517 million—second only to "Jurassic World's" global bow of $525 million. But the dinosaurs had the added benefit of China—"Star Wars" won't open there until Jan. 9.

This is just the latest in a laundry list of records set by J.J. Abrams' film, the seventh in the franchise, which had analysts anticipating a debut anywhere from $150 million to $300 million.

The "X-factor" was quality. While "The Force Awakens" drew enormous pre-sales, the film was kept under lockdown from the press and critics until mere days before it was released to the public. Reviews turned out to be stellar (95 percent on Rotten Tomatoes), as did early audience reaction, who gave the film an A CinemaScore.

Rentrak's Senior Media Analyst Paul Dergarabedian said that's the key element that may push the film to the $2 billion mark by the end of its run. Many are already going back for a second helping.

"The enthusiasm has really turned into a cultural event," said Dave Hollis, Disney's executive vice president of theatrical distribution. "It's unbelievable."

AP
This photo provided by Disney/Lucasfilm shows Daisy Ridley, right, as Rey, and John Boyega as Finn, in a scene from the film, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," directed by J.J. Abrams.

"It feels historic. The marketing team has embarked on a two-plus year journey to create this event feel," Hollis added. "It's hard to think you could replicate this, but never say never."

Males overwhelmingly drove the astronomical earnings, comprising 58 percent of the audience.

"Many of the bigger films of the past few years have been driven by that often marginalized female audience," Dergarabedian said. "This proves that if you put the right film in the marketplace, the guys will show up in big numbers. You can still break records with one gender being the dominant one."

He predicted that over time, Daisy Ridley's protagonist may help even the gender breakdown. Hollis agreed, noting that the breakdown evened out across the weekend too. Friday audiences were 63 percent male, he said.

The film also drew mainly adults, who made up 71 percent of the audience. Teens accounted for only 9 percent, but those numbers may go up in the coming weeks as holiday vacations kick in.

IMAX, 3D and other premium large format screens further helped drive the massive earnings. Nearly half of moviegoers—47 percent —chose to see the film on the generally pricier screens. IMAX screens alone accounted for $48 million of the global earnings.

But "Star Wars" didn't fly alone this weekend. A few other movies attempted to provide some counterprogramming and ended up with comparatively decent results.

Almost a galaxy away, Fox's animated "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip" came in second with $14.4 million.

According to exit polls, 70 percent of audiences were comprised of families. The film also played to a rather diverse audience of 22 percent Hispanics and 19 percent African-Americans.

"Starting on Monday, 73 percent of K through 12 is out of school. Why wouldn't we make our picture available?" said Chris Aronson, Fox's president of domestic distribution as to why they released their film "in the teeth of the hurricane."

"'Star Wars' is the phenomenon it is and will continue to be, but there is another segment of the audience out there," he added.

In third place, the Tina Fey and Amy Poehler comedy "Sisters" earned an estimated $13.4 million out of the gates. A whopping 79 percent of audiences were female for the R-rated comedy—a solid indicator that the counterprogramming against "Star Wars" was in fact a wise choice.

"A healthy box office needs something for everyone," said Nick Carpou, Universal's president of domestic distribution, who expects a solid performance for the comedy in the weeks to come.

Rounding out the top five were "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay—Part 2," with $5.7 million and "Creed," with $5.1 million.

This is the biggest overall weekend in box office history with combined grosses north of $300 million, putting 2015 in range of becoming the first $11 billion year in history.

"We're on the verge of a record-breaking year," Dergarabedian said. "I think we're going to do it."

1. **"Star Wars: The Force Awakens,"** $238 million ($279 million international).
2. **"Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip,"** $14.4 million.
3. **"Sisters,"** $13.4 million ($1.8 million international).
4. **"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay—Part 2,"** $5.7 million ($7.8 million international).
5. **"Creed,"** $5.1 million.
6. **"The Good Dinosaur,"** $4.2 million ($9.2 million international).
7. **"Krampus,"** $3.8 million ($1.8 million international).
8. **"In the Heart of the Sea,"** $3.5 million ($3.9 million international).
9. **"Diwale,"** $1.9 million.
10. **"Bajirao Mastani,"** $1.7 million.

German church celebrates 'Star Wars' at a Sunday service

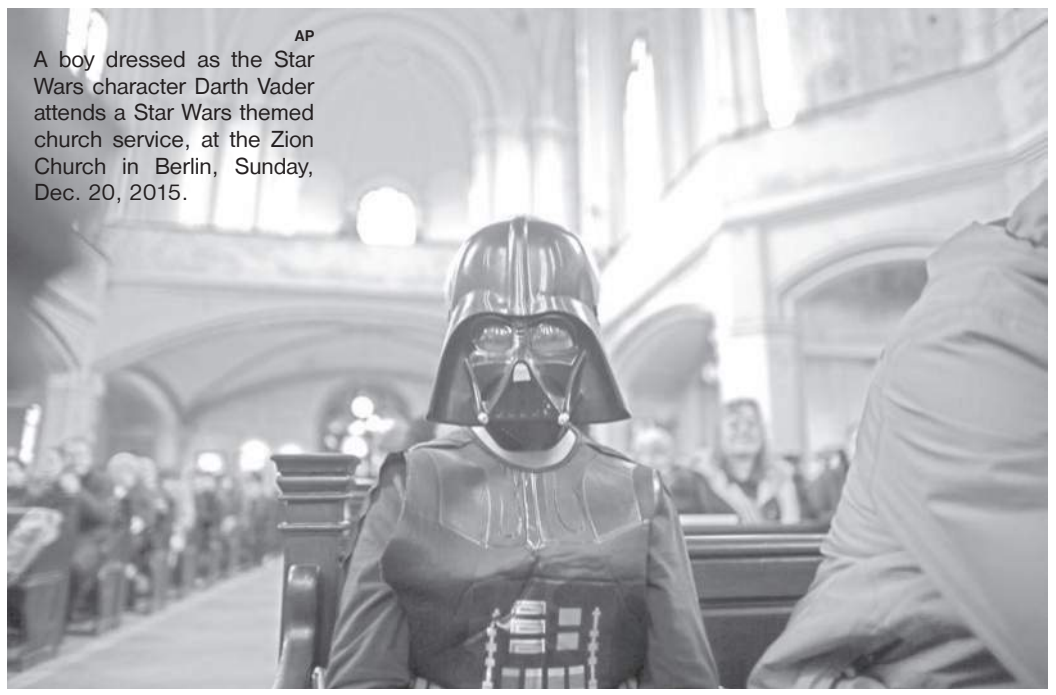
BERLIN (AP)—The force is strong in Berlin.

A church in the German capital invited "Star Wars" fans to attend a special service Sunday themed on the sci-fi blockbuster in an attempt to attract more young people into the pews.

About 500 people heeded the call and attended the service, some carrying light saber props or wearing Darth Vader masks. It was more than twice as many as usually come to Zion Church on a Sunday.

"We were very happy to see so many people in the church today," said Protestant pastor Lucas Ludewig said after the service. "It's great that there are subjects that people are interested in. They trust us to make them part of the church service without making it too Christian or too Star Wars, but to find a good compromise."

With the film's theme song—played on the church's organ—still echoing around the rafters, the 30-year-old said he came up with the idea of the "Star Wars" service while talking with fellow pastor Ulrike Garve, 29, about how much they were looking forward to the seventh instalment in the franchise "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," which opened Friday.



AP
A boy dressed as the Star Wars character Darth Vader attends a Star Wars themed church service, at the Zion Church in Berlin, Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015.

"'Star Wars' picks up religious images, including Christian images and maybe some from other religions," said Ludewig. "In doing so, it shows that the Bible and the Church are part of our culture that keeps being reworked and reinterpreted."

Churchgoer Jonathan Wonneberger, dressed as a Jawa trader, described the service as a welcome change from tradition.

"You don't have to take everything that's religious too seriously. Of course you have to treat it with respect, but when there's a global event like Star Wars, it's ok to jump on the bandwagon," he said.

Scott McGuire, sporting a Chewbacca costume, said he planned to go see the movie later.

"I think the whole question of God is very interesting, but getting up early on a Sunday is one of those things. But for something like this, I'll go," he said.

Japan festival offers nearly $1 million to make a short film

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP)—A Japanese festival focused on the art of the short film is offering a new award of nearly a million dollars to a director from anywhere in the world with a great pitch for a movie.

Organizers say short video is where audiences are going, as entertainment increasingly gets consumed on smartphones and tablets. They also believe the format holds potential for novice filmmakers, bringing fresh insight and energy to the industry.

The deadline for submitting a 500-word pitch on what's billed as a "thrilling, exciting, moving" storyline is Feb. 29. The pitch must be written in either Japanese or English.

Five finalists will be chosen first. Each gets a 500,000 yen ($4,000) cash prize. Then one among the five will be picked, and receive 100 million yen ($800,000) in funding to make his or her movie. That winner will get an additional 1 million yen ($8,000) award.

Rieko Muramoto, executive director for digital business at the Japanese entertainment company Avex Digital, which is providing the contest funds, believes it's a worthy investment for finding fresh content for online services, pioneering a genre and nurturing talent. She stresses she isn't out to make a quick buck.

"The short film holds a lot of potential for busy people who are watching video on smartphones, which means a complete story must be told much more quickly," Muramoto said.

Scoring success can get tougher than for regular movies and TV shows. Switching to another piece is a mere click away—far easier than walking out of a theater where you paid for a ticket, she added.

"Survival is tougher," she said. "You have to move an audience in 15 minutes."

The winning work will be shown at the 2017 Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia, an annual event devoted to short films in Yokohama, a Tokyo suburb, which is running the contest.

"Movies aren't about length," said Tetsuya Bessho, an actor who founded the festival in 1999, likening the best short films to the minimalist but fine-tuned concentration of haiku poetry.

"There are Hollywood flops with everything thrown in for marketing. You can't decide if it's a comedy, a love story or an action film. People are getting bored with that kind of movie," said Beshho, whose films include "Godzilla vs. Mothra" and "Solar Crisis," with Charlton Heston.

Hollywood star Bloom arrives in India after visa delay

NEW DELHI (AP)—British actor Orlando Bloom has been allowed entry into India after being turned away a day earlier from New Delhi's international airport because he did not have a valid visa, officials said Monday.

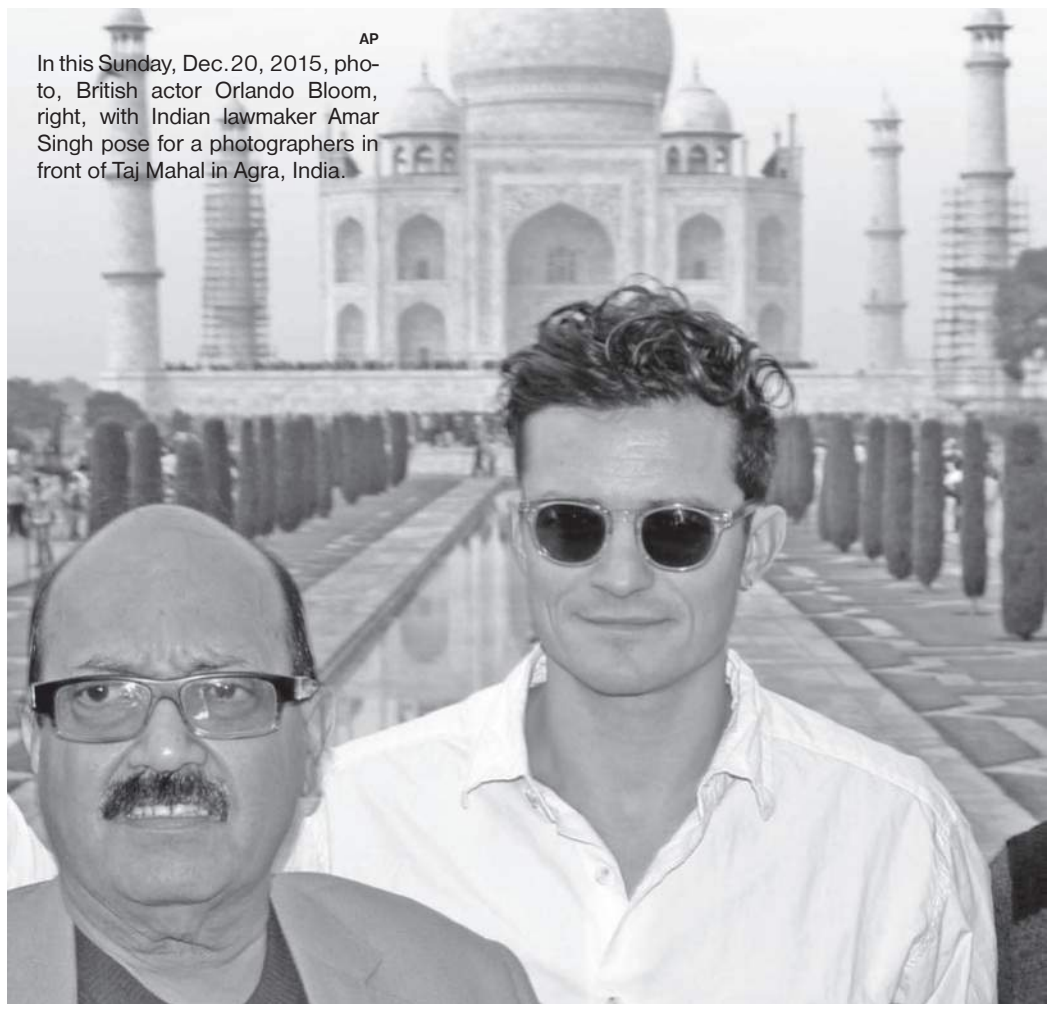
The "Lord of the Rings" star was able to enter India after the External Affairs ministry intervened and gave him a special visa.

Bloom was invited by the top elected official of Uttar Pradesh state to promote tourism. He applied for an e-visa and arrived Saturday without realizing there was a problem with his application.

Bloom was forced to return to London but arrived in India the following day and was seen posing at the Taj Mahal on Sunday.

An External Affairs ministry spokesman said Bloom must have landed without the confirmation email or forgotten to check whether the visa had been granted.

Bloom is best known for his performances in "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" trilogies. He has also played roles in such Hollywood blockbuster films as "Pirates of the Caribbean," "Troy" and "Kingdom of Heaven."



AP

In this Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015, photo, British actor Orlando Bloom, right, with Indian lawmaker Amar Singh pose for a photographers in front of Taj Mahal in Agra, India.

Shock jock formerly of 'Opie and Anthony' arrested in fight

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. (AP)—A radio shock jock who hosted "Opie and Anthony" is facing charges over a fight with a woman at his New York home.

Nassau County police say Anthony Cumia was arrested Saturday after the 26-year-old woman contacted authorities.

He was arraigned Sunday on a charge of second-degree strangulation. A judge released him without setting bail but ordered him to stay away from the woman.

He's due back in court in January.

His attorney, Alan Schwartz, says Cumia "emphatically denies the allegations."

The 54-year-old Cumia was fired by satellite radio company SiriusXM last year after he took to Twitter to complain in obscenities that a woman had punched him in the face. Sirius called his remarks "racially charged" and "hate-filled."

Aretha Franklin appears with Jazz at Lincoln Center

NEW YORK (AP)—The Queen of Soul made a surprise appearance at the House of Swing, helping the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra usher in the holiday season at their first concert in their newly refurbished home.

Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis had a special gift for the audience when he introduced Aretha Franklin in the middle of Thursday night's annual "Big Band Holidays" concert at the Rose Theater. The concert followed a ribbon-cutting ceremony hosted by Bette Midler to open the new Mica and Ahmet Ertegun Atrium at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Franklin, walking onstage to a standing ovation, said, "Wynton, I think maybe I'll change the program just a little bit."

Accompanying herself on piano, she then sang the Christmas carol "O Tannenbaum" in English and German. She followed with a soulful, gospel-infused version of the Tom Jones-Harvey Schmidt tune "My Cup Runneth Over," an outtake from her 1972 album "To Be Young, Gifted and Black," which she recently added to her concert repertoire.

The 73-year-old diva, joking that "this happens to be my 50th year in the business and I'm feeling it," dedicated her performance to Atlantic Records founder Ahmet Ertegun, who died in 2006. Ertegun signed Franklin to the label in 1967 and helped turn her into the Queen of Soul by recording such hits as "Respect."

Mica Ertegun, a prominent interior designer, chose to honor her late husband's legacy by providing the lead gift and taking an active role in the multi-million-dollar makeover of the public spaces connecting Jazz at Lincoln Center's three performance venues.

Marsalis, in a backstage interview, noted that when Jazz at Lincoln Center moved into its new home, dubbed the House of Swing, on two floors of the Time Warner Center in 2004, the organization poured its resources into the performance venues, leaving little left over for the atrium, which was treated as an afterthought.

Now, he says, the public space has "a warmth and feeling" that was lacking before. The redesign, with its curving walls of red oak, opens up the public space to the two-story glass windows offering sweeping views of Central Park and the Manhattan skyline, adds a raised stage by the windows for performances by jazz ensembles, connects the floors with a glass staircase, and incorporates state-of-the-art technology, including a 26-foot video wall.

"It's elegant, it's grand and it has a type of relaxed formality," said Marsalis, JALC's managing and artistic director. "It's a more welcoming atmosphere for the House of Swing."

The concert was a welcome homecoming for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, which used other New York venues and toured the U.S. after the renovations began in July.

'Real Housewives' star to get out of prison before Christmas

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—One of New Jersey's "Real Housewives" is set to be freed from the big house just days before Christmas.

Teresa Giudice (JOO'-dys) will be released Wednesday from the Danbury Federal Correctional Institution in Connecticut, her lawyer said. She will then head home to her husband, Joe, and their four daughters in Montville, where she will be on home confinement until Feb. 5.

Her attorney, James Leonard Jr., said his client is upbeat and looking forward to coming home. Leonard said he plans to drive Giudice home from prison, but he declined to provide more specific details about her release.

Giudice has been at the prison since January. She and her husband pleaded guilty last year to bankruptcy fraud.

They admitted hiding assets from bankruptcy creditors and submitting phony loan applications to get some $5 million in mortgages and construction loans.

Sheet music written by Beethoven, found in home nets $100K

GREENWICH, Conn. (AP)—Sheet music written by Ludwig van Beethoven and found in a Connecticut home has fetched $100,000 at auction.

The Greenwich Time reports (http://bit.ly/1m1pooT) that appraiser Brendan Ryan spotted the sheet music when he visited the home of a Greenwich woman looking to sell some belongings. He recognized Beethoven's handwriting in the German words, directions and symbols on the page because he'd seen it before.

Research authenticated the music and determined it was from a sketchbook dating to 1810 and used by the composer for brainstorming.

It's unclear what happened to the sketchbook after Beethoven's death in 1827. It was sold in portions, with fragments turning up.

Ryan says finding a complete sheet is rare. It was purchased by a German antiques dealer.

It's unclear how the page found its way to the Greenwich home.

Hospital visitors should practice simple courtesy

DEAR ABBY: I have been a nurse for 35 years, and over time, I have noticed a decline in simple courtesy from people who visit friends or relatives in the hospital. Several things visitors should keep in mind:

1. If you don't know what room the patient has been assigned, ASK. Don't wander in and out of rooms until you find the right one.

2. Be prepared to give the first and last names of the patient when asking for directions.

3. Abide by the visiting hours and the number of persons allowed into a patient's room at one time. Remember, patients need dedicated time for treatments and procedures.

4. Do not bring small children to the hospital unless they are visiting their parent or sibling. You needlessly place them at risk by exposing them to infections.

5. Make sure any food you bring to the patient is allowed by the physician.

6. Never question the staff for information regarding the patient's diagnosis or condition. It is against the law for a health care provider to divulge patient information to an unauthorized individual. Ask the patient.

7. Get permission before plugging in your cellphone charger.

8. When taking the elevator, use public elevators. And when the doors open, stand back and allow the occupants to safely step out before entering.

PATIENT-CENTERED NURSE IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR NURSE: If readers take to heart your suggestions in the spirit they were given, everyone will benefit. That visitors would charge into hospital elevators, wander the halls, barge into patients' rooms, and drag small children into sickrooms is an indication that there has been not only a decline in courtesy but also common sense.

Patients are in hospitals because they need intensive treatment and REST. Creating a party atmosphere in which the patient is expected to entertain numerous "guests" is physically and emotionally draining and a danger to the person's health.

DEAR ABBY: My ex-husband, "Charles," is dying, and we have decided to get remarried before he dies so he won't be alone at the end. (And also so I can receive his VA benefits when he's gone.) Is this morally wrong? I do take care of him, but not all the time because Charles likes living with his uncle and will remain there after we marry. I guess I just have a little guilt trip going on.

GUILT TRIP IN TEXAS

DEAR GUILT TRIP: Charles earned his benefits. I see nothing morally wrong with people providing for someone they care for after their death. Unless Charles was coerced into his generosity, I can't see why you should feel guilty.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

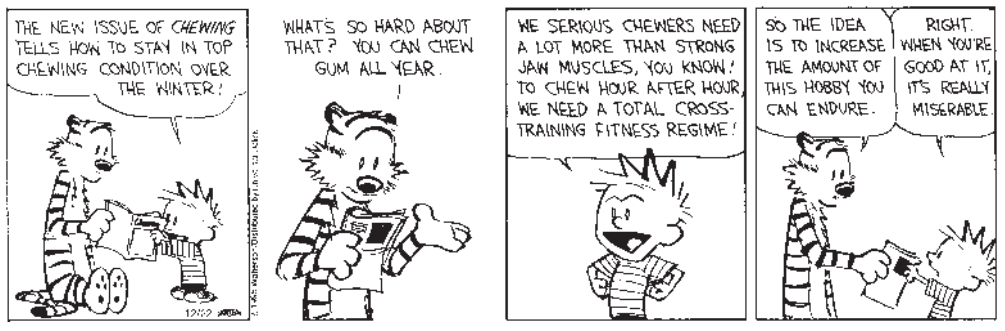
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

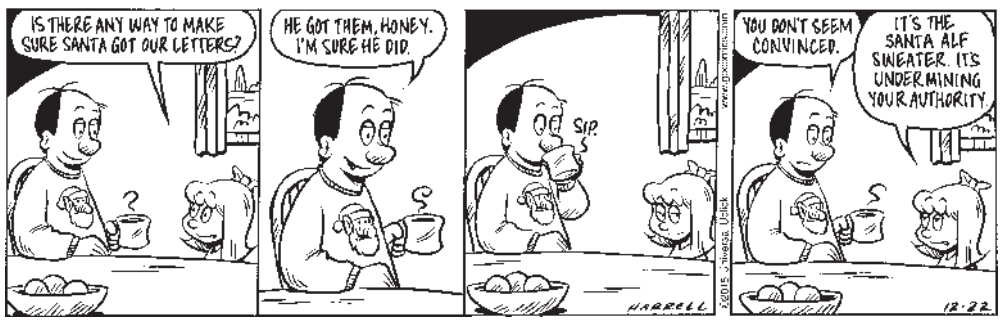

THE NEW ISSUE OF CHEWING TELLS HOW TO STAY IN TOP CHEWING CONDITION OVER THE WINTER!
WHAT'S SO HARD ABOUT THAT? YOU CAN CHEW GUM ALL YEAR.
WE SERIOUS CHEWERS NEED A LOT MORE THAN STRONG JAW MUSCLES, YOU KNOW! TO CHEW HOUR AFTER HOUR, WE NEED A TOTAL CROSS-TRAINING FITNESS REGIME!
SO THE IDEA IS TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF THIS HOBBY YOU CAN ENDURE.
RIGHT. WHEN YOU'RE GOOD AT IT, IT'S REALLY MISERABLE.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


IS THERE ANY WAY TO MAKE SURE SANTA GOT OUR LETTERS?
HE GOT THEM, HONEY. I'M SURE HE DID.
SIP
YOU DON'T SEEM CONVINCED.
IT'S THE SANTA ALF SWEATER. IT'S UNDERMINING YOUR AUTHORITY.
12-22

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Hat-tipper's word
5 Iota
8 "Kapow!"
12 Chorus girl?
13 Herr's cry
14 Cronyn of "Cocoon"
15 Partridge's yuletide home
17 Suffix with decor
18 Bolted
19 Kind of walk or trail
21 Lionel product
24 Hero shop
25 Tiny particles
26 Happy-go-lucky
30 Netflix mailing
31 Slice a turkey
32 "Born in the —"
33 "You betcha!"
35 "Hey!"
36 Light touches
37 Santa's laughs
38 "Yay!"
41 Novak of "Vertigo"
42 Hotel chain
43 Living it up
48 Pottery oven
49 New (Pref.)
50 Memorial bio
51 Hades river
52 GPS lines
53 Gold source

DOWN
1 Tourist's need
2 Pub pint
3 — loss (puzzled)
4 Finicky TV cat
5 Farm shelter
6 Cocktail cooler
7 "How rude!"
8 Hypothesis starter
9 Rwanda tribe
10 Love, Italian-style
11 Simple
16 Get bronze
20 Protected, at sea
21 Neat
22 Wander
23 &&&&
24 Challenges
26 Looney Tunes fare
27 Hurry
28 Old oil name
29 Takes a course?
31 Tuscan "Ta-ta!"
34 Egyptian landmark
35 Ski hat topper
37 Towel pronoun
38 Chinese fry pans
39 Skip by
40 Unique
41 "Get Smart" villains
44 Circus catcher
45 MLB stat
46 Bonn article
47 Summer abroad

Solution time: 22 mins.

R	A	W		B	R	A	G	A		B	A	M
U	N	I		A	C	I	O	J		O	L	C
B	O	N	D	S	I	R	L	S		N	E	E
			D	E	S		A	T	T	A	C	K
L	I	B	E	L	S		N	E	A	P		
E	J	O		S	U	B		N	Y	A	C	K
T	O	N	S		E	R	S		E	R	M	A
O	L	E	T	A		A	C	S		T	O	M
		C	I	R	C		A	T	H	E	N	A
R	A	H	R	A	H		R	O	E			
A	L	I		B	O	N	V	O	Y	A	G	E
V	I	N		I	R	R	E	G		R	E	V
E	T	A		C	E	A	S	E		F	O	E

Yesterday's answer 12-22

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13				14			
15				16				■	17			
■	■	■	18			■	19	20				
21	22	23			■	24				■	■	■
25				■	26					27	28	29
30			■	31					■	32		
33			34					■	35			
■	■	■	36				■	37				
38	39	40				■	41			■	■	■
42				■	43	44				45	46	47
48				■	49			■	50			
51				■	52			■	53			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Meghan Trainor, 22; Brooke Nevin, 33; Ralph Fiennes, 53; Diane Sawyer, 70.

Happy Birthday: Stop worrying about what everyone else is doing and start making adjustments to your own life and future. Anger and regret are a waste of time. Learn all you can and move on. Expand your knowledge through travel, seminars and conferences geared toward engaging in conversations with like-minded individuals. This is a year to expand your mind and your friendships. Your numbers are 5, 16, 20, 23, 31, 34, 48.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Tend to business whether you are updating your resume, setting up meetings or tidying up your paperwork before the year comes to a close. An opportunity will come out of nowhere. Mix business with pleasure and you will excel. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Stay on top of your game and be open to what's going on around you. Don't let your emotions lead to confusion. Offering to help a charity will work in your favor. Romance looks promising and lifestyle changes look inviting. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Life may be hectic, but you need to stay focused regardless of distractions. Giving in to poor habits won't help you close out the year in tip-top shape. Question anyone who tries to persuade you to be indulgent. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Use your energy wisely. You'll end up arguing or doing something that is likely to end in injury or insult. Concentrate on maintaining what you have, not on changing things impulsively. Self-improvement is your best option. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't force your will on others. As long as you go about your business and allow others to do the same, you will avoid an emotional scene. Make important changes in your personal life. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Share your thoughts and mingle with friends, colleagues and loved ones. The more expressive you are, the easier it will be for others to relate to you. An interesting encounter could occur if you are out picking up last-minute items. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Take care of personal responsibilities and documents that need tending to before the year comes to a close. Don't bicker over trivial matters. Understanding that this can be a stressful time of year for some people should make it easier to avoid confrontations. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Take a moment to remember what's transpired this year and you will find a way to reconnect with people you miss. Make choices that will allow you to pursue the personal changes you've been longing to make. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Listen to proposals, but don't jump into a joint venture. You can make changes, but only for the right reason. Do your best to stick to a budget and a plan you can control. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Industry events will be the perfect place for you to experience both personal and professional encounters. Your ability to be precise and express your ideas enthusiastically will ensure that others will take notice. Put your best foot forward. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Keep your secrets for now. Don't share personal information or let your emotions get the best of you. Stick close to home and protect your assets and your possessions. Concentrate on getting your house ready to host a party. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Delays can be expected if you are traveling. Don't let anyone talk you into taking on responsibilities that aren't yours. Focus on your mental, emotional and physical well-being. Plan something special with someone you want to impress. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are strategic, outgoing and passionate. You are inquisitive and inventive.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8				7			3	
	9			1				8
1				6			9	
					3	1		4
4		9				8		2
6		2	7					
	4			3				6
5				4			2	
	8			2				3

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/22

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's SUDOKU Answer

5	4	8	1	3	2	6	7	9
2	7	3	9	8	6	4	1	5
1	6	9	4	5	7	2	3	8
7	9	2	3	4	1	8	5	6
8	3	5	6	2	9	7	4	1
6	1	4	8	7	5	3	9	2
3	5	7	2	9	8	1	6	4
9	8	1	7	6	4	5	2	3
4	2	6	5	1	3	9	8	7

Difficulty Level ★ 12/21

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

DR. JOYCE BROTHERS (1927-2013) Solution: 6 letters

A	M	E	A	D	V	I	C	E	R	U	T	C	E	L
N	D	A	N	U	R	E	H	C	A	E	Ⓣ	B	E	I
A	E	V	T	A	T	E	V	O	L	Ⓢ	A	E	R	S
L	N	W	O	C	I	H	I	D	Ⓞ	U	L	A	G	T
Y	T	I	J	C	H	D	O	Ⓗ	E	A	I	A	E	E
Z	O	D	F	E	A	G	C	R	I	D	M	C	D	N
E	U	O	A	R	R	T	A	N	E	E	P	E	O	E
T	R	W	M	A	A	S	E	M	S	Y	A	L	C	R
H	A	E	E	W	I	W	E	H	E	P	N	E	T	S
A	G	D	Y	R	S	S	O	Y	W	A	E	B	O	R
T	E	A	R	P	T	W	B	O	X	R	L	R	R	E
A	B	O	A	E	F	P	R	I	Z	E	I	I	A	D
X	M	P	L	I	S	K	O	O	B	H	S	T	T	A
I	E	L	L	I	S	A	I	N	G	T	T	Y	E	E
R	E	M	I	L	T	O	N	P	O	P	U	L	A	R

© 2015 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com Download the Wonderword Game App! 12/22

Advice, Advocate, Analyze That, Author, Bauer, Baywatch, Books, Celebrity, Dear God, Degree, Diane, Doctorate, Elaine, Entourage, Estelle, Fame, Film, Game Show, Host, Lecture, Lisa, Listeners, Love, Match Game, Media, Milton, Morris, New Jersey, Newspaper, Panelist, Popular, Prize, Radio, Readers, Taxi, Teacher, Therapy, Widowed, Writer

Yesterday's Answer: Shocking

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 or 43**, order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 43 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. is inviting qualified individuals to apply for the following position:

Accountant (1)
Job duties: Prepare, examine or analyze accounting record, financial statements or other financial reports to asses accuracy, completeness and conformance to reporting and procedural standards. Report to management regarding the finances of establishments. Establish tables of accounts and design entries to proper accounts. Develop, implement, modify and document record keeping and accounting systems. Compute taxes owed and prepare tax returns ensuring compliance with payment, reporting and other tax requirements.

Job requirements: Accounting graduate or 4 years bachelor degree in accounting. Minimum 5 years experience in accounting. Well-versed in SAP accounting or any other accounting software. Must be skilled in use of MS Excel, Word and PowerPoint. Strong communication and interpersonal skills, team player and with positive attitude.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. Human Resources Office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan.
Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Monday, December 28, 2015

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
Qualified women, minorities and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

Francisco C. Cabrera
dba Design Florist/Cabrera Funeral

Job Vacancy Announcement

(1) **Assistant Funeral Director**

(1) **Funeral Service Assistant**
- Must have a driver's license.
- Able to work flexible hours.
- Good personality.

All interested applicant must apply in person.
Cabrera Center Bldg., Beach Road, Garapan

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Saipan Tribune
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NEW 2, 3, and 4 bedroom energy efficient apartments in Saipan.
Lower utility costs up to 70% through solar panels and solar hot water.
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WANTED

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The *Saipan Tribune* is looking for a FULL-TIME news reporter.

QUALIFICATIONS
- Above average writing skills and can work within deadlines;
- Fast learner, self-starter, and a team player;
- Computer literate;
- With photography skills;
- Must have reliable means of transportation.

If you have what it takes to be part of a dynamic team, email your résumé and samples of your work to editor@saipantribune.com. You may also drop it off at the *Saipan Tribune* office on the second floor of the JP Center Building on Beach Road, Garapan. ON-ISLAND HIRES PREFERRED.

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Panthers remain perfect, outlast Giants in nasty game

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—Graham Gano's 43-yard field goal as time expired kept Carolina perfect this season with a wild 38-35 victory over the New York Giants on Sunday.

Cam Newton threw for five touchdowns in building a 28-point lead before New York stormed back to tie it with 1:46 remaining. The rally tied the NFL record set by San Francisco against New Orleans in 1980. The big difference: The 49ers won their game; the Giants lost.

Newton led the Panthers (14-0) to their 18th straight regular-season victory. He has thrown for 19 touchdowns in the last five games and a career-best 33 in this so-far special season.

Carolina visits Atlanta and hosts Tampa Bay to finish the schedule. All three previous NFL teams to reach 14-0 — Miami in 1972, New England in 2007 and Indianapolis in 2009 — made the Super Bowl.

The Giants (6-8) fell one game behind Washington in the NFC East.

AP

Carolina Panthers' Ted Ginn (19) runs past New York Giants' Prince Amukamara (20) for a touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Steelers 34, Broncos 27

In Pittsburgh, Ben Roethlisberger passed for 380 yards and three touchdowns as the Steelers rallied.

Antonio Brown caught 16 passes for 189 yards and two scores as Pittsburgh (9-5) moved into the AFC's second wild-card spot by dominating the NFL's best defense after spotting the Broncos 17-point lead.

The Steelers controlled the second half, finally taking the lead when Ryan Shazier intercepted Brock Osweiler to set up a 23-yard dart from Roethlisberger to Brown with 3:34 to go.

Osweiler threw for 296 yards with three touchdowns passing and another on the ground but struggled in the second half as the Broncos (10-4) lost their second straight and failed to lock up the AFC West title.

Cardinals 40, Eagles 17

In Philadelphia, David Johnson ran for 187 yards and three touchdowns, Carson Palmer threw a TD pass and Arizona beat Philadelphia to clinch the NFC West title.

The Cardinals (12-2) will earn a first-round bye with a win over Green Bay next week. They still have a chance to secure the No. 1 seed if they win out and Carolina loses its last two games. The Eagles (6-8) would win the NFC East title if they beat Washington at home and the Giants on the road.

The Cardinals outclassed Philadelphia in every way on their way to their eighth straight win.

Johnson, a rookie filling in for injured backs Chris Johnson and Andre Ellington, had a pair of 1-yard TD runs and a 47-yarder.

Seahawks 30, Browns 13

In Seattle, Russell Wilson continued his record pace by throwing three touchdown passes, two to Doug Baldwin, and the Seahawks clinched a playoff spot for the fourth straight season.

Seattle (9-5) won its fifth straight and, thanks to losses this week by Tampa Bay and the New York Giants, wrapped up a postseason berth.

Wilson was 21 of 30 for 249 yards. He found Baldwin on TDs of 6 and 3 yards in the first half, then hit Tyler Lockett on a 27-yard TD strike on the first play of the fourth quarter. Wilson became the first quarterback with three or more TD passes and no interceptions in five straight games.

Packers 30, Raiders 20

In Oakland, Aaron Rodgers threw a touchdown pass and Damarious Randall returned an interception for another score to help Green Bay.

Green Bay (10-4) clinched a spot in the postseason in the first quarter when the New York Giants lost to Carolina. But the Packers still have their eyes set on a division title and remain one game ahead of Minnesota in the NFC North.

Derek Carr threw two early interceptions to put Oakland (6-8) in a hole but then had a pair of touchdown passes to Amari Cooper. It wasn't enough as the Raiders were eliminated from playoff contention.

Bengals 4, 49ers 14

In Santa Clara, Jeremy Hill ran for a pair of 1-yard touchdowns to back AJ McCarron's first career start, and the Bengals clinched a fifth straight postseason berth,

As Andy Dalton watched from the sideline with a large cast over his broken right thumb, McCarron threw a 20-yard touchdown pass to Tyler Kroft just before halftime as the Bengals (11-3) forced three second-quarter turnovers by San Francisco (4-10) to take command.

Vontaze Burfict and Adam "Pacman" Jones each made interceptions on balls that deflected off the hands of tight end Vance McDonald. Cincinnati capitalized with touchdowns on two of the turnovers, including Kroft's TD catch one play and five seconds after the second pick.

Vikings 38, Bears 17

In Minneapolis, Teddy Bridgewater threw a career-high four touchdowns and ran for another, and the Vikings took a big step toward clinching playoff spot.

Bridgewater completed 17 of 20 passes for 231 yards without a turnover, connecting twice with Stefon Diggs for scores. Jerick McKinnon and Zach Line had the other touchdown catches on a remarkably productive afternoon for all of Minnesota's running backs.

Chargers 30, Dolphins 14

In San Diego, Danny Woodhead had his first career four-touchdown game and Philip Rivers recovered a fumble on a play that began with him throwing an interception in what might have been the final NFL game in San Diego.

Woodhead caught TD passes of 20, 9 and 9 yards, and scored on a 2-yard run for the Chargers (4-10), who failed to score a touchdown in each of their previous two home games. Miami (5-9) lost for the fourth time in five games.

The Chargers Cannon went off. The disco ditty "San Diego Super Chargers" blared for what might be the final time.

Redskins 35, Bills 25

In Landover, Kirk Cousins equaled his career high with four touchdown passes and ran 13 yards for another score, helping Washington win consecutive games for the first time in more than a year and stay atop the NFC East.

While the Redskins (7-7) moved closer to a playoff berth, the Bills (6-8) are now assured of missing the postseason for the 16th year in a row, the NFL's longest active drought.

Chiefs 34, Ravens 14

In Baltimore, Kansas City capitalized on a variety of miscues by Baltimore, extended its winning streak to eight games and remain in the thick of the playoff picture.

Tyvon Branch returned a fumble 73 yards for a touchdown in the first quarter and Marcus Peters clinched the victory with a 90-yard interception return for a score with 4:36 left.

Kansas City (9-5) also scored touchdowns following a drive-extending penalty by Baltimore and a failed fake punt.

With the win, the Chiefs became the first NFL team to follow a five-game slide with eight successive wins in the same season.

Texans 16, Colts 10

In Indianapolis, Brandon Weeden replaced injured quarterback T.J. Yates late in the first half and threw a go-ahead 8-yard TD pass to Jaelen Strong with 10:36 to play as Houston won at Indianapolis for the first time in 14 tries.

The Texans (7-7) took sole possession of the AFC South lead by snapping a two-game losing streak.

The Colts (6-8) have lost three straight and need help to make the playoffs.

The battle of backup quarterbacks didn't earn style points. Yates was 6 of 10 for 68 yards with one interception before hurting his left knee. Weeden went 11 of 18 with 105 yards, leading the Texans to three field goals and the decisive TD.

Patriots 33, Titans 16

In Foxborough, Tom Brady threw for two touchdowns to help New England hold onto the top spot in the AFC in a game that saw Titans quarterback Marcus Mariota knocked out of the game with a knee injury in the first half.

The 2014 Heisman Trophy winner and the No. 2 overall pick in this year's draft, Mariota left and did not return after being sacked to end consecutive second-quarter drives.

Brady completed 23 of 35 passes for 267 yards.

Falcons 23, Jaguars 17

In Jacksonville, Julio Jones scored for the first time in seven weeks, and Atlanta ended a six-game losing streak.

Jones finished with nine receptions for 118 yards and set the franchise record for catches in a season. He has 118, breaking teammate Roddy White's mark of 115 set in 2010.

The Falcons (7-7) had lost six straight and even had some wondering whether they had given up after losing 38-0 last week at Carolina.

SIDEBAR

Cam Newton locks up MVP

NEW JERSEY (AP)—Cam Newton, MVP. Get used to that.

Mark it down. The race is over. If there was a question before, Newton's final-minute drive to pull out a thrilling 38-35 win over the New York Giants as time expired and save the Panthers' perfect season should lock it up.

The Panthers were on the verge of an epic collapse, as the Giants stormed back from down 35-7 to tie it in the final two minutes. The Panthers' undefeated dreams looked like they would die with a terrible loss at the Giants.

But Newton, who had an unbelievable game, had time. He hit Fozzy Whittaker for 9 yards and Greg Olsen for 16. After a timeout, Newton completed a pass to Ted Ginn for 12. Then he rushed for 10, and the Panthers kicked the game-winning field goal as time expired.

Newton threw for 340 yards and five touchdowns, and rushed for 100 yards. For those who don't think Newton's numbers are good enough to be MVP, Sunday's performance should end that talk. And his team is now 14-0.

Before Newton's big plays on the final drive, it looked like the Giants would be the team making history on Sunday.

The San Francisco 49ers came back from 28 points down in 1980 to beat the New Orleans Saints. That was (and still is, after the Giants lost) the biggest comeback in regular-season history. The Buffalo Bills famously came back to win in overtime after falling behind 35-3 to the Houston Texans in the playoffs at the end of the 1992 season.

The Panthers were in total control at 35-7. Giants receiver Odell Beckham was melting down and fighting with Panthers cornerback Josh Norman. The Panthers were marching to 14-0. Then the Giants got going, with a few mistakes from the Panthers like a blocked field goal and a fumbled handoff on an option play by Newton. Beckham got his revenge with a touchdown in the final two minutes to tie it, and made a point of stepping over Norman after he got up in the end zone.

And with all the momentum on the Giants' side, Newton pulled out an amazing win.

The Panthers are the fourth team in NFL history to start at least 14-0, joining the 1972 Miami Dolphins, 2007 New England Patriots and 2009 Indianapolis Colts. And their star quarterback locked up his first MVP on Sunday as well.

Kyrie Irving returns, Cavaliers rock lowly 76ers

CLEVELAND (AP)—Kyrie Irving scored 12 points and played 17 minutes in his season debut and LeBron James had 23, leading the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 108-86 victory Sunday over the Philadelphia 76ers, who lost their 10th straight and fell to 1-28.

Irving was on the floor for the first time since breaking his left kneecap in Game 1 of the NBA Finals against Golden State. The Cavs managed without him, going 17-7 to start the season. But Cleveland is more complete with the All-Star point guard healthy and back.

Matthew Dellavedova made four 3-pointers and added 20 points for the Cavs, who improved to 12-1 at home and are eyeing a Christmas Day game against the Warriors. James didn't play in the fourth quarter, logging a season-low 26 minutes.

Nerlens Noel had 15 points and 12 rebounds for the brutal Sixers, now 0-17 on the road and on their second double-digit losing streak.

Irving received a warm ovation from the crowd during pregame introductions. He waved in appreciation and was soon cheered again as he dribbled the ball up the floor for the first time, a sight Cleveland fans have been waiting months to see.

Irving missed his first five shots before scoring on an uncontested layup after James made a steal near mid-court. Following the assist, James walked over to Irving, who moments earlier had a shot rejected by Noel, patted his teammate on the head as they walked toward the bench and said, "Welcome back."

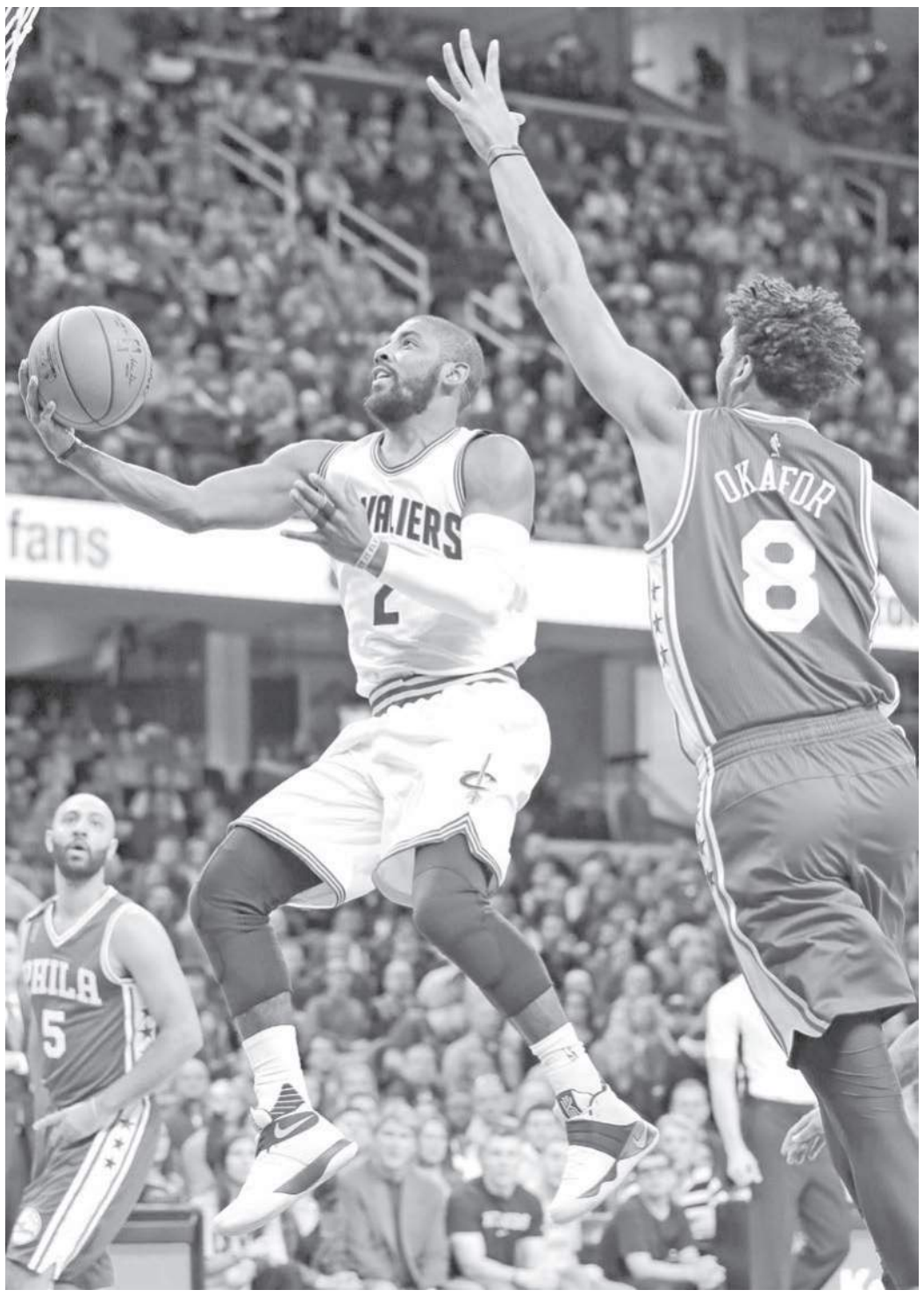
The Cavs plan to ease Irving into the rotation, building up his stamina before extending his minutes. After he was taken out in the first quarter, Irving immediately began riding a stationary bike to stay loose.

Irving scored just two points in the first half, but had seven in the third quarter when he showed a couple moves that have made him one of the league's premier backcourt players. He made a signature crossover dribble and scored on a twisting layup before dropping a 3-pointer to give the Cavs a 62-40 lead.

When the Cavs pushed their lead to 28 after three, it appeared Irving's long-awaited debut was over. But coach David Blatt brought him in for five more minutes in the fourth quarter. Irving made a 3-pointer and tossed a perfect alley-oop pass to Jared Cunningham, who caught it with his right hand and dunked in one motion.

Cleveland outscored Philadelphia 34-13 in the second quarter to take control.

James seemed intent on net letting the Sixers gain any confidence. He scored 11 points in the quarter, finishing a 9-0 run with a two-handed dunk off a lob pass from J.R. Smith. James hung on the rim and kicked his legs like a little kid to punctuate the play.



AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' Kyrie Irving (2) drives to the basket against Philadelphia 76ers Jahlil Okafor (8) in the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015, in Cleveland.

Bucks 101, Suns 95

In Phoenix, The Milwaukee Bucks had lost 12 straight road games since early November.

That streak came to a satisfying halt Sunday. Khris Middleton scored 11 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter and Greg Monroe hit a spinning, go-ahead layup with 20.6 seconds left to lift Milwaukee over the Phoenix Suns 101-95.

Bucks coach Jason Kidd said after the game that he will be taking an indefinite leave to have hip surgery. Assistant Joe Prunty will direct the team in his absence.

Milwaukee will try to carry over Sunday's success without Kidd.

"We didn't want to home without a win," Middleton said. "We competed, we got stops, we pushed the ball up and executed."

Eric Bledsoe had his potential tying layup blocked by Michael Carter-Williams with 7.9 seconds left, and Middleton hit four free throws in the final 5 seconds.

"I just turned the ball over," Bledsoe said. "It is was it is. I have to take better care of the ball, especially down the stretch."

Carter-Williams had 20 points, nine rebounds and six assists. Bledsoe and T.J. Warren led the Suns with 18 points each.

The Bucks' O.J. Mayo was called for a flagrant foul after yanking down Warren on a fast-break layup attempt with 7:28 left. Warren hit the two free throws, and on the ensuing possession, Jon Leuer hit a 3-pointer for an 86-77 Phoenix lead.

Milwaukee then went on a 15-2 run to lead 92-88, with Middleton scoring seven points during the stretch.

The Suns scored seven of the next eight points, but then Carter-Williams hit a seven-footer, Mayo blocked Bledsoe's shot and then Monroe hit his layup.

"(Coach Jason Kidd) called my number," Monroe said. "Just trying to make sure I got a good basket and got something going to the rim."

The Suns took a 15-point lead in the third quarter, but the Bucks cut it to 71-70 in the final seconds on Middleton's jumper. Middleton, whose buzzer-beater won last season's game in Phoenix between the two teams, added seven assists.

"It started in the third. You have a chance to blow it away," Suns coach Jeff Hornacek said. "Middleton got going there, we let Michael Carter-Williams go where ever he wanted, then you are in a battle."

The Suns committed 20 turnovers and the Bucks blocked six shots.

"Making plays on the defensive end, and on the offensive end sharing the ball ... setting screens and sharing the ball were big down the stretch," Kidd said.

Heat 116, Trail Blazers 109

In Miami, Chris Bosh scored 29 points, Hassan Whiteside shook off a slow first half to finish with 22 points and 11 rebounds, and Miami beat Portland.

Dwyane Wade had 18 points and added seven assists for the Heat. They trailed by 12 at one point and were down 10 at the half.

The Heat shot 57 percent and played the final 13:37 without Goran Dragic. He was ejected for the first time in his career after arguing two foul calls.

Damian Lillard had 32 points and nine assists for Portland.

Timberwolves, Nets 85

In New York, Karl-Anthony Towns had 24 points and 10 rebounds in the building where he was taken with the No. 1 pick in the June draft, and Minnesota beat Brooklyn.

Gorgui Dieng added 20 points and 10 boards to lead a strong bench unit that blew the game open in the fourth quarter. Andrew Wiggins scored 16 points, and Ricky Rubio had 15 assists.

Brook Lopez had 20 points, 12 rebounds and five assists for the Nets.

Hawks 103, Magic 100

In Orlando, Kyle Korver scored 13 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter and Atlanta rallied to beat Orlando.

Korver had four 3-pointers in the final period and six overall. Mike Scott added 15 points, and Al Horford and Jeff Teague scored 14 apiece in Atlanta's third straight victory.

The Magic had the ball and a chance to tie with 7.3 seconds remaining, but the Hawks smothered an inbounds pass to Evan Fournier. The ball eventually found its way to Nik Vucevic, but he failed to get off a shot. Vucevic led Orlando with 20 points and 11 rebounds.

Kings 104, Raptors 94

In Toronto, Rajon Rondo had 19 points and 13 assists, Rudy Gay scored 19 points against his former team and Sacramento beat Toronto to end a four-game road losing streak.

Omri Casspi added 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Kings.

DeMar DeRozan had 28 points for the Raptors. Toronto point guard Kyle Lowry was ejected for consecutive technical fouls after arguing with referee Scott Wall with 7:22 left in the third quarter.

Pelicans 130, Nuggets 125

In Denver, Anthony Davis left after the first quarter with an illness only to return in the fourth and finish with 27 points, lifting New Orleans past Denver.

Davis had a dominating first quarter, scoring 19 points before leaving after feeling sick. He returned early in the fourth and sparked the Pelicans.

Tyreke Evans and Jrue Holiday each added 21 points for New Orleans. Will Barton had 32 points and 10 rebounds for Denver.

SIDEBAR

Bucks coach Kidd out indefinitely for hip surgery

PHOENIX (AP)—Milwaukee Bucks coach Jason Kidd is taking an indefinite leave to have hip surgery.

Assistant coach Joe Prunty will direct the team in Kidd's absence, general manager John Hammond said Sunday night after the Bucks' 101-95 victory over the Phoenix Suns.

Kidd said in a team statement that he "tried to put off surgery for as long as I could," but his doctor told him he'd be better served having the operation now.

The Bucks are 11-18 this season and 52-59 in two seasons under Kidd.

Prunty has 20 years of NBA coaching experience, including three under Kidd. He served as an assistant during Kidd's one season coaching the Brooklyn Nets and has been with Kidd in Milwaukee the past two seasons. Prunty also is the head coach of Britain's national team.

In Los Angeles, Indiana Pacers forward Paul George has been hit with a $35,000 fine after criticizing officials and swearing during a television interview, the NBA said in a statement on Saturday.

George was unhappy with a series of calls after the Pacers defeated the Brooklyn Nets 104-97 on Friday.

"The stripes (were) terrible," George told local television station FOX Sports Indiana.

"We (had to) go out and just play. The way this game was going and how they (were) calling it, we had to play. ... It's frustrating, but hopefully the league does a better job of looking at shit like this."

George contributed 23 points and 10 rebounds during the win but also gave up seven turnovers.

It is not the first time George has been fined for criticizing match officials.

He was fined $10,000 after the Pacers opening game of the season when they were beaten 106-99 by the Toronto Raptors.

In 2014 he was ordered to pay $25,000 by the NBA after suggesting that a Pacers defeat to the Miami Heat was caused by biased refereeing or "home cooking."

FIFA ethics court bans Blatter, Platini for 8 years

ZURICH (AP)—Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini were each banned for eight years by the FIFA ethics committee on Monday in a stunning removal of world soccer's most powerful leaders.

FIFA President Blatter and his one-time protege Platini were kicked out of the sport for conflict of interest and disloyalty to FIFA in a $2 million payment deal that is also the subject of a criminal investigation in Switzerland.

Blatter's FIFA career is ending in disgrace after more than 17 years as president and 40 years in total with the scandal-hit governing body.

Platini's bid to succeed his former mentor in the Feb. 26 presidential election is now likely over, though both are expected to appeal at the FIFA appeals committee and the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Blatter has suggested he could pursue a lengthier appeal to Switzerland's highest court, the federal tribunal, which can intervene if legal process was abused.

Ethics judges decided that Blatter and Platini broke FIFA Code of Ethics rules on conflicts of interest, breach of loyalty and offering or receiving gifts.

AP

Sepp Blatter, pictured here in an undated file photo, and Michel Platini were banned by the FIFA's ethics court for eight years.

Both denied wrongdoing in 2011 when Platini took $2 million of FIFA money approved by Blatter as uncontracted salary for work as a presidential adviser from 1999-2002.

Blatter was fined 50,000 Swiss francs ($50,250) and Platini, a FIFA vice president and head of European soccer's governing body UEFA, was fined 80,000 Swiss francs ($80,400).

"Neither in his written statement nor in his personal hearing was Mr. Blatter able to demonstrate another legal basis for this payment," the judges said. "By failing to place FIFA's interests first and abstain from doing anything which could be contrary to FIFA's interests, Mr. Blatter violated his fiduciary duty to FIFA.

"His (Blatter's) assertion of an oral agreement was determined as not convincing and was rejected by the chamber."

Platini, the judges said, "failed to act with complete credibility and integrity, showing unawareness of the importance of his duties and concomitant obligations and responsibilities."

Blatter was scheduled to hold a news conference at 11 a.m. local time (1000 GMT) at FIFA's former headquarters in Zurich.

He arrived soon after 10am in a chauffeur-driven car accompanied by his daughter, Corinne, and media spokesman Thomas Renggli. He did comment to reporters as he was bustled through a throng of cameras.

Blatter and Platini both have strong motivation to fight the bans in fast-track appeal cases.

Blatter, who turns 80 in March, wants a FIFA swansong by hosting the election congress in Zurich and being made honorary president by the 209 member federations.

The 60-year-old Platini wants to clear his name, pass a FIFA integrity check and be declared an official candidate in the election he had been favored to win.

Platini's campaign has stalled since being quizzed on Sept. 25 in a Swiss federal investigation of suspected criminal mismanagement at FIFA.

Switzerland's attorney general has opened criminal proceedings against Blatter for the suspected ''disloyal payment'' of FIFA money to Platini and selling undervalued World Cup TV rights for the Caribbean.

Platini's status in the criminal case is "between a witness and an accused person," attorney general Michael Lauber said in October.

In recent media interviews, both men have said Platini asked Blatter for a salary of 1 million Swiss francs. He got a contract for 300,000 Swiss francs annually, in line with FIFA's then-wage structure, plus a ''gentleman's agreement'' to get the rest later. Swiss law obliged FIFA only to pay the deferred money within five years.

Platini was paid in February 2011, just before Blatter began campaigning for re-election against Mohamed bin Hammam of Qatar. Platini's UEFA urged its members weeks before the June 2011 poll to back Blatter, who was elected unopposed when Bin Hammam was implicated in bribery.

Few FIFA officials knew of the Platini payment which emerged during a wider Swiss probe of the governing body's business affairs, including suspected money laundering in the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding contests.

The agreement was "a classic conflict of interest" between two executive committee members, FIFA audit panel chairman Domenico Scala said in October.

Platini was an icon of French football, a former national team captain and coach, when the newly-elected Blatter offered him a job in 1998.

He had led the organization of a successful 1998 World Cup, won by host France, and on the eve of the tournament had campaigned to help Blatter win the FIFA presidency.

Blatter appeared to see Platini as a protege in FIFA politics who could add ideas and credibility to his presidential office.

Their friendship cooled after Platini was elected UEFA president in 2007. It became strained when Blatter reneged on a 2011 promise to step aside in four years' time, which could have left Platini a clear run at the FIFA top job.

Barcelona wins third FIFA Club World Cup

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP)—The FIFA Club World Cup brings together the continental champions to crown the king of club soccer, but the tournament usually ends up being a showdown of South America against Europe. Or to be more precise, it comes down to a South American champion eager to show its superiority against a European champion bothered with the chore of interrupting its season for a long trip to Asia. The primary goal is to not get injured.

Barcelona might be the one European power that doesn't see the Club World Cup that way. The club actually cares.

The La Liga leaders made the trip to Japan this week seeking a third Club World Cup crown, and the unlucky South American side standing in their way was River Plate, whose manager Marcelo Gallardo said he hoped to see a full-strength Barcelona. His reason: It would be "a pleasure to face the best three or four players in the world."

By the end of Sunday's final—a convincing 3-0 victory by Barcelona at Yokohama's International Stadium — Gallardo and his men had felt the full brunt of the unprecedented attacking force of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar.

Both Messi and Neymar returned from sitting out Thursday's semifinal win over Guangzhou Evergrande to rejoin Suarez at the front of Barcelona's attack, and each member of MSN had his moment in the spotlight.

Messi, who had a decent chance saved by goalkeeper Marcelo Barovero in the 11th minute, scored the breakthrough goal in the 36th minute. Dribbling away from two River Plate defenders toward the top of the box, Messi put the ball into space to the right for Dani Alves. Neymar headed Alves' cross down to Messi, who controlled the ball with his right thigh (and then perhaps with his right arm) to flick the ball in with his left boot for a 1-0 Barcelona lead.

Four minutes into the second half, Suarez made it 2-0. Andres Iniesta pounced on a River Plate giveaway and initiated a quick counterattack by finding Sergio Busquets near the halfway line. Busquets side-footed a beautiful ball over the River Plate defense and ahead to Suarez for the easy finish against a helpless Barovero.

Barcelona pushed for a third goal, mounting wave after wave of attacks to produce chance after chance. Both Messi and Suarez missed opportunities, but the goal that would've gone viral was Neymar's solo slalom through the River Plate defense. He, however, got upended in the box.

The third goal finally came in the 68th minute. Messi drew three defenders and slid a pass to his left to a wide-open Neymar. The Brazilian had time to back up a couple of steps before lofting a cross to Suarez, who directed his header back across goal and inside the far post. Barovero could do nothing but watch the ball float into his net for Suarez's fifth goal of the tournament.

The victory earned Barcelona its third Club World Cup crown to go with titles in 2009 and 2011 when the Catalans beat Estudiantes and Santos, respectively. Corinthians, champions in 2000 and 2012, is the only other club to have won it more than once.

Both Messi, with five goals in five games, and Suarez, five in just two, now share the all-time Club World Cup scoring lead with Cesar Delgado of Monterrey (five in six games). Impress your friends with that stat.

WINNERS

From Page 28

his second first place finish. Bradley Manalo rounded out the Top 3.

In the flyweight division, E.J. Hemley's head crank on Jadrien Camacho handed the former the victory, while Terlaje finished third.

In the heavyweight category, the returning Kelvin Fitial dethroned 2014 champion Adam Harris after stopping the latter with his head and arm choke. Josh Castro placed third in the division.

The Top 3 finishers in each weight class were awarded with cash prizes with the champion taking $60 and an extra $20 if they won via submission. Participants per divisions suited up in a double-round robin elimination before competing in the finals and consolation rounds. Points were awarded to each fighter if they failed to win via submission. A full or top mount and back take were worth 4 points each, 3 for side mount, and 2 for sweep and any other take downs.

HOPWOOD 2

From Page 28

ond half, while Hopwood 2 kept going. Castillo made it a 4-0 advantage right in the second minute of the final half, while Millare recorded two straight goals in a span of two minutes (26th and 28th), and Costales bagged her second goal in the 30th minute. Castillo closed out for Hopwood 2 with her goal in the 39th minute.

The newly crowned champion school was coached by Jude Loste and Zachariah Johnson. Other members of the team are Melanie Dasco, Lovely Loyola, Joan Repoberbip, Leisha Sally, Sharmaine Francisco, Rita Agulto, Jaibelle Nelmida, and Keziah Reyes.

Hopwood 2 was unbeaten this season as it swept its six games in the two-round robin elimination. It advanced to the finals after whipping two-time champion William S. Reyes Elementary School in the semis last Thursday, 6-0.

San Antonio, on the other hand, won over Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School in the semis, 2-0, to earn the right to face Hopwood 2 in the finals. Both Hopwood and San Antonio were in the Southern Group of the league with the latter owning a 3-0-3 win-draw-loss record and placing second to the former after the elimination. WSR and GTC, which finished third and fourth, respectively, after the Kingfishers posted a 2-1 win in the consolation match, were in the Northern Group.

Meanwhile, the organizing Northern Mariana Islands Football Association also handed individual awards besides the championship, perpetual, and runner-up trophies to the teams after the finale.

GTC's Jannah Casarino took the Golden Boot award in the girls division for scoring 13 goals this season, while Mt. Carmel School's Merrick Toves notched the same plum in the boys category for knocking in 7. Hopwood 2's Millare and WSR's Oliver Fajardo brought home the Golden Glove awards for not allowing their respective opponents to score a single goal.

DELOATCH

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with a 77, just two shots ahead of Muna's 79.

Twenty other MGA members joined the first round of the season-ending competition. The list includes Jerry Ayuyu (gross 109 and net 90), Aaron Benavente (94/79), Jeri Dela Cruz (103/82), Joey Dela Cruz (82/75), Jenny Hegland (87/77), Carl Hocog (91/80), Sylvan Igisomar (108/84), Harry Nakamura (80/74), Mart Naputi (101/81), Erlinda Naputi (121/91), Ned Norita (91/83), Jesse Ramon (112/88), John Sablan (104/86), Greg Sablan, Jr. (96/82), Jack Salas (90/75), Jess Seman (86/79), Shine Tenorio (96/78), Louie Tilipao (85/75), and Calvin Yamagishi (93/80).

The second and last MGA Ace of Aces tournament will be held next month. MGA did not indicate in the results sent to *Saipan Tribune* if the gross or net scores (two rounds combined) will decide the winner of the 2015 club championship.

2015 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League Boys Finals

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Mt. Carmel School's Richard Steele uses his body to stop the ball during their title game against William S. Reyes Elementary School in the boys division of the 2015 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League last Saturday at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.

A Mt. Carmel School player, right, kicks the ball.

Mt. Carmel School's Danielle Colombo uses his knee to receive the ball after a throw-in.

Mt. Carmel School's Jin Ho Park, left, battles a William S. Reyes Elementary School player for possession.

William S. Reyes Elementary School's Maniago, left, and Mt. Carmel School's Richard Steele move closer to the ball.

Mt. Carmel School goalkeeper Juan Guerrero waits for the shot of William S. Reyes Elementary School's Wayne Lizama.

Mt. Carmel School's Merrick Toves kicks the ball out after a free kick from William S. Reyes Elementary School's Anthony Bergancia.

William S. Reyes Elementary School's Wayne Lizama goes up for a header.

Mt. Carmel School supporters watch the game.

Panthers remain perfect, outlast Giants in nasty game

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Hopwood 2 routs San Antonio in finale

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Hopwood Junior High School 2 players and coach Jude Loste, standing second right, pose with their trophies during the awards ceremony for the girls division of the 2015 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League last Saturday at the Hopwood pitch. Joining them in the photo is NMIFA staff Jershwin Angeles, standing left.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Hopwood Junior High School 2 romped past San Antonio Middle School, 8-0, to clinch the girls championship in the 2015 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League last Saturday at the Hopwood pitch.

Paulyn Joyce, Katrina Costales, Jerlyn Del Castillo, and Therize Millare scored two goals apiece in the finale for Hopwood to give the Hilitais their first championship in the annual tournament that started in 2008.

Joyce hit back-to-back goals, breaking the ice for Hopwood 2 in the fourth minute and getting her second in the 10th. Costales also made it to the board in the first half, knocking in her first goal in the 17th to lift Hopwood to a 3-0 halftime.

San Antonio could not score in the first 20 minutes of play as Hopwood dominated possession and when the former occasionally attacked, the latter's defense quickly stepped in to frustrate the eventual runners-up.

San Antonio's misfortunes on offense continued in the sec-

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Van Der Mar Maas, Attao lead AOW 10 winners

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Jasper Van Der Maas and Lorenzo Attao recorded twin wins in the Art of War 10: Grappling, Submission and Jiu jitsu Challenge held last Saturday at the Trench Tech gym in Garapan.

Van Der Maas topped the lightweight and middleweight divisions to make up for his runner-up finishes in the same categories in last year's Art of War 9. Van Der Maas, who bowed to Roman Alvarez in last year's lightweight bout finale, had a rematch with his tormentor and avenged his loss last weekend after winning via submission (straight ankle lock). Shane Alvarez joined Van Der Maas and Roman Alvarez in the Top 3.

In the middleweight division, Van Der Maas used the same strategy to end his five-minute title bout against Ken Santos. Kier Agda completed the winners list in the division after a no-show from Shane Alvarez in the consolation match.

In the welterweight division, Roman Alvarez foiled Van Der Maas' bid for a third win after prevailing on points, 14-2. Shane Alvarez again joined the finalists in the podium for placing third in the division.

In other results, Attao duplicated Van Der Maas' feat for ruling the bantam and featherweight divisions. Attao, who also took the featherweight crown in last year's competition, made it two in a row after defeating the debuting Mike Muna via arm bar submission. Tabi Jay Muna was ranked third. In the bantamweight finale, Attao employed a Kimura lock on Piling Terlaje to log

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Jasper Van Der Maas, left, works his way for a straight ankle lock submission win against Ken Santos in their middleweight title match in the Art of War 10: Grappling, Submission and Jiu jitsu Challenge last Saturday at the Trench Tech gym in Garapan.

DeLoatch rules MGA December tourney

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas Golf Association members gather for a group photo before the December Ace of the Month Tournament held at the Marianas Country Club.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Chandler DeLoatch prevailed in the Marianas Golf Association's December Ace of the Month Tournament held at the Mariana Country Club last Dec. 5.

DeLoatch shot a gross 81 built around his 41 in the first nine holes and 40 in the last nine. He has a 15 handicap to end up with a net 66 and a four-stroke win against runner-up Tony Guerrero. DeLoatch saved pars on holes No. 3, 5, 6, and 9 to make up for his bogeys in the five other holes on the front nine. At the back, DeLoatch played a bit better, as he had pars in the first three holes (No. 10 , 11, and 12) and did the same at No. 14, 17, and 18.

Tony Guerrero also listed a 41 in the first nine holes, but had to settle for the runner-up honors this month, as he finished with a 42 on the back for a net 70. Guerrero has a 13 handicap and narrowly defeated Jay Muna for third place, as the latter posted a net 71. The 8-handicapper Muna got off to a strong start with his gross 37 on the front nine, but dropped to third when he registered a gross 42 on the back.

Meanwhile, this month's tournament also doubled up as the first part of the club's Ace of Aces Tournament.

Early favorite J.J. Atalig logged the best gross score in the field with his 5-over par 77. He registered a 39 and 38 on the front and back nines, respectively, and deducting his 3 handicap, Atalig ended up

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